

Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area  
Bureau of Land Management

Public Scoping Meeting

San Diego, California  
April 25, 2002

Reported by Susan M. Contreras, CSR No. 11811

1           The Public Scoping Meeting was held at 8757 Rio  
2 San Diego Drive, San Diego, California, on Thursday,  
3 April 25, 2002, commencing at 7:10 p.m., before  
4 Susan M. Contreras, CSR No. 11811, a Certified Shorthand  
5 Reporter in and for the State of California.

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10           A P P E A R A N C E S

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12       Lewis Michaelson, Facilitator

13       Lynette Elser, Environmental Coordinator, BLM

14       Roxy Trost, ISDRA Planning Team Lead, BLM

15       Neil Hamada, Recreation Area Manager

16       Bruce Shaffer, Associate District Manager

17       Amy McCoy, CH2M Hill

18       Bob Haggerty, Law Enforcement

19       The Public/Audience

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1           SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA; THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2002

2                           PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

3                                   7:10 P.M.

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5                           INTRODUCTION AND OPENING REMARKS

6

7           MR. MICHAELSON: Good evening, everyone. We're  
8 ready to start tonight. If I could ask everyone to  
9 please take their seats. The gentleman to my left is an  
10 American sign language interpreter, and he's going to be  
11 asking does anyone who needs assistance tonight -- want  
12 to make an announcement first.

13                   If there's anyone in the audience who needs  
14 signing, if you -- we have a row right over here that  
15 you could come sit down in, and we'll take care of your  
16 needs. If you need assistance getting to the front row,  
17 if you'd raise your hand, one of the BLM staff will  
18 escort you up here. We'll make that announcement a  
19 little bit later in the meeting as well in case someone  
20 comes in late.

21                   My name is Lewis Michaelson, and I am here  
22 specifically in the role of the moderator. I have not  
23 been involved in the preparation of this document nor am  
24 I a BLM employee. I was hired specifically to moderate  
25 the six public hearings that are being held for EIS for

1 the recreation hearing management plan, and I will not  
2 have any part in decision making or guarding the  
3 document or the plan as well.

4 My main purpose in being here is to make sure  
5 we have a safe and orderly and efficient process for  
6 taking your comment and that everyone, regardless of  
7 their viewpoint or their perspective, has the  
8 opportunity to be heard in this process.

9 I need to make a number of announcements that  
10 are relevant to you particularly in the audience. One  
11 is that the parking will be validated for you on your  
12 way out if you tell them that are you here for the BLM  
13 hearing. So if you just tell them that on the way out,  
14 that expense will be handled for you.

15 Second of all, you may see some "No Exit" signs  
16 over here on various doors. They can be used in case of  
17 an emergency, so if for whatever reason, fire alarm goes  
18 off, whatever, please do use them to exit the room.  
19 They just aren't for normal ingress or egress. They do  
20 open, and they do work, and they are there for their  
21 emergency purposes.

22 Also the BLM asked me to announce that --  
23 hopefully you didn't have any trouble finding this room.  
24 This was a change from the original room. The original  
25 room was -- I think was slated to hold 450 people, and

1 we had the opportunity in this venue to change the room  
2 to accommodate up to a thousand people, as we have had  
3 large turnouts at all the hearings we've had. So  
4 hopefully it looks like we'll have room for everyone who  
5 may come tonight.

6 Finally, in terms of housekeeping, if you  
7 didn't see them on your way in, we're probably not going  
8 to take many, if any, breaks during the evening, and the  
9 hearing is going to last approximately three hours. So  
10 if you need to, the public facilities are down this hall  
11 and just to the left before you came in.

12 I also wanted to -- I know we're going to be  
13 doing introductions later of the panel, but I did want  
14 to point out that we have here with us tonight  
15 Bruce Shaffer, who is the associate district manager.  
16 And also mentioned -- if any of you were at the Phoenix  
17 hearing, we have Linda Hansen (phonetic), acting  
18 district manager.

19 This is in response to the scoping comments  
20 that were made earlier in the process about wanting to  
21 have a management present at as many of these meetings  
22 as possible.

23 Let's see. Purpose of the meeting. That's  
24 really important. As you know, there's a comment period

25 going on on the Environmental Impact Statement and the

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1 recreation area management plan. And there are two ways  
2 to provide comments. One is orally at a hearing like  
3 this, and the other is through writing in a written  
4 comment, and there are a number of ways that you can  
5 provide us comments.

6           You should have received the yellow handout  
7 like this when you came in. It makes it very clear how  
8 to go about doing that. You probably also received one  
9 of these blue sheets. This is a form that you can use  
10 to put your written comments on.

11           You're not required to use this form, but if,  
12 for instance, you have time to fill something out  
13 tonight and turn it in tonight, that would save you the  
14 expense of having to mail it in.

15           The purpose for this meeting is so that  
16 representatives of the Bureau of Land Management who are  
17 involved in the preparation of these documents and the  
18 further processing of these documents are here tonight  
19 to hear what you have to say firsthand, and that's why  
20 it's important that you come up to the microphone when  
21 it's time for your time.

22           I'll give you a series of ground rules. Those  
23 of you who have already signed up to speak filled out  
24 one of these green cards. Attached to it was a set of

25 speaker guidelines. You can see those posted up here as

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1 well, and again, I'll go over those in more detail when  
2 it's time for their comments.

3           There were approximately 250 of the  
4 Environmental Impact Statements mailed out. They've now  
5 been out on the streets for close to a month, but  
6 there's also a website access if you do not have a copy  
7 and would like to take a look at the draft EIS. And  
8 it's an important document, obviously, if you're going  
9 to be able to provide focused and relevant comments.

10           Also, seated to my right is the court  
11 reporter. I'm going to be working with her tonight to  
12 make sure we get a good, solid, accurate recording of  
13 what you have to say. At times I may have to ask you to  
14 step closer to the mike or slow down or whatever it  
15 takes because we want to make sure we capture everything  
16 that you have to say.

17           And with that, I would like to turn it over to  
18 the rest of the panel to introduce themselves.  
19 Lynette.

20           MS. ELSER: My name is Lynette Elser. I'm the  
21 environmental coordinator for BLM.

22           MS. TROST: I'm Roxie Trost, the resource chief  
23 for El Centro BLM and project lead.



24                   MR. HAMADA: I'm Neil Hamada, the dunes  
25 manager.

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1                   MR. SHAFFER: I'm Bruce Shaffer, the associate  
2 district manager out of Riverside, California.

3                   MS. MCCOY: I'm Amy McCoy. I work for CH2M  
4 Hill, which is the independent contractor hired to  
5 assist in the preparation of the draft of the  
6 Environmental Impact Statement.

7                   MR. HAGGERTY: I'm Bob Haggerty. I'm a ranger  
8 out of El Centro.

9                   MR. MICHAELSON: Real quick, I just want to go  
10 over the agenda so you know what to expect tonight.  
11 Right after this -- these introductions, we're going to  
12 have a manager -- excuse me -- a welcome by Mr. Shaffer,  
13 and then there's a series of presentations. They go  
14 pretty quickly, about 30 minutes worth, and that will  
15 give a nice overview of the plan of the document that  
16 you're going to be commenting on.

17                   Then the vast majority of the time tonight is  
18 reserved for the IBCA on the agenda, obviously, which  
19 public comment, the main purpose here. So we'll go  
20 directly to the presentations now, and then as soon as  
21 we're done with those, we'll be ready for public  
22 comment.

23                   (As requested, the "Welcome" and

24 "Presentations" portions of the meeting were not  
25 recorded stenographically.)

10

1 PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

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3 MR. MICHAELSON: A little bit of applause. If  
4 we could turn the lights back up, please, appreciate it.

5 I'd like to make the announcement before we  
6 begin, just one more time. If there's anyone who needs  
7 assistance with American sign language interpretation,  
8 if you would either come forward to this row up here or  
9 if you need assistance, raise your hand and someone will  
10 escort you up here.

11 I want to make that announcement just one more  
12 time before we began, otherwise we will discontinue the  
13 signing. If anyone you know in the audience does come  
14 that you know needs it, let someone at the registration  
15 desk know, and they'll let us know immediately, and we  
16 will take care of that. Thank you.

17 All right. We are to that important part of  
18 the meeting where it's time for your opportunity to  
19 speak. Again, everybody who would like to speak is to  
20 fill one of these out. We already have an impressive  
21 number of people signed up to speak, over 60, which is  
22 more than we had in any other of the hearings.

23           Everyone who filled one of these out, attached  
24 to it was a sheet. This says "Ground Rules for  
25 Speakers." So everyone who is speaking tonight should

11

1 be aware of them. But I need to go over them because  
2 they're very important in getting through this evening  
3 in an orderly fashion.

4           First of all, as I said, written comments are  
5 given the same weight and consideration as oral  
6 comments. What makes an oral comment special here  
7 tonight is that you have the opportunity to address the  
8 BLM representatives who are involved in the document and  
9 to let them hear firsthand what your issues and  
10 suggestions and concerns are. Therefore it's important  
11 that you address the panel.

12           We are asking speakers supply comments. If you  
13 ask questions, that's fine. They'll be reported, but  
14 they won't be answered in this venue or this forum.  
15 This is not the time as your question and answer  
16 meeting.

17           The time limit that -- I see an awful lot of  
18 people here. Frankly, if you've already been to one of  
19 the -- one or more of the previous five hearings -- I  
20 know you've already heard this -- slight modification.  
21 Each speaker is allowed two minutes, and there was a  
22 modification to that created after the Long Beach

23 hearing so where we would provide a second helping of  
24 five minutes if there was sufficient time.

25 I'm looking at the number of speakers we

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1 already have signed up to speak, and just to warn you, I  
2 doubt that we will be in that situation. We probably  
3 have already enough cards, and they will probably be  
4 turned in as the evening goes -- and here comes one  
5 right now -- to exhaust the time till 10:00 p.m. So I  
6 just wanted to make you aware of that.

7 In order to make it easy for you to wrap up  
8 your comments in a comfortable place, after one and a  
9 half minutes have passed, I will hold up this sign. It  
10 says "30 seconds." That means you have 30 seconds to  
11 wrap up your comments, and that way you should be able,  
12 again, as I said, to find a comfortable place.

13 If you're reading from a prepared statement,  
14 you might want to look up from it occasionally so that  
15 you can see whether or not the sign has been held up.

16 This is perhaps the most important part, and  
17 that is we know that you're here taking time out of your  
18 busy schedules because you care deeply about something  
19 and that you have passion for the issues which are going  
20 to be discussed tonight. We also know there are a range  
21 of perspectives and views.

22               So I can guarantee you you're going to hear  
23 something tonight that you didn't want to hear or that  
24 isn't in agreement with your own views. We should  
25 expect that, and that's fine. That's the purpose of a

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1 public hearing, to hear from all perspectives. But we  
2 need to make sure that all views are respectful and that  
3 no one is interrupted. We need to have it quiet and  
4 respect during the two minutes that each person is  
5 speaking.

6               Public speaking is one of the most fearful  
7 things for most people. It takes a lot of courage to  
8 get up here and do this for a lot of people. We don't  
9 want anyone to feel intimidated or distracted in that  
10 process.

11              Please be aware that your time is not  
12 transferrable. And finally, if you would please address  
13 your comments towards the issues and not against people  
14 or individual groups. Okay.

15              We have a speaker waiting area up here. It's  
16 this first row facing me. The reason we have that is I  
17 will call up the first five names so you'll know it's  
18 your turn to come up and speak, and I'll continue to do  
19 that throughout the night, read ahead speakers, that way  
20 you'll have some idea when you're coming up.

21              When I do call your name, if you would please

22 take a seat in the speaker waiting area, that way when  
23 it's your turn, instead of having to spend, you know, a  
24 couple of minutes trying to get from that end of the  
25 room to this, you'll be ready to go. And that way we'll

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1 make sure that we have the best chance of getting  
2 everybody's comments in tonight during the meeting.

3 With that in mind, the first five speakers that  
4 I have are Nathan Colestock, Doc Morgan, Jarrod  
5 Bullard -- and I'll apologize in advance if I  
6 mispronounce anyone's name -- Jim Ricker, Flo Haynes,  
7 Alex Cook. So if the five of you would come forward  
8 here and sit just in that row where that gentleman is.  
9 And I'd like to invite Nathan Colestock to be our first  
10 speaker.

11 And again, we're trying to get this on the  
12 record, so, please, everyone, if I didn't make that  
13 clear, the purpose of this podium and microphone is to  
14 make sure that everyone can hear you and that the court  
15 reporter can get a good record. Thank you. And if  
16 everyone would start by stating their name, I'd  
17 appreciate it.

18 MR. COLESTOCK: My name is (inaudible).

19 MR. MICHAELSON: It's not on?

20 MR. COLESTOCK: Is it on now?

21 MR. MICHAELSON: Please address the panel,  
22 please.

23 MR. COLESTOCK: Okay. All right. My name is  
24 Nathan Colestock, field representative for Duncan  
25 Hunter, congressman. I'd like to read a prepared

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1 statement that he wrote earlier this morning for  
2 everybody.

3 It says, "Dear friends, first I would like to  
4 thank the Off-road Business Association for inviting me  
5 to attend your event. I regret that our vote schedule  
6 has kept me in Washington. Your participation tonight  
7 is a great testament to your commitment to our shared  
8 goal of keeping not only the Imperial sand dunes but all  
9 public lands open for multiple use.

10 "Southern California's growing population is  
11 hungry for the outdoors experience, and not every one of  
12 them wants to get it by hiking 20 miles through a  
13 hundred degrees of heat while nibbling tofu."

14 MR. MICHAELSON: Excuse me, Mr. Colestock. I  
15 don't want to get off to a bad start with this hearing.  
16 If I didn't make it clear, we don't want any expressions  
17 whatsoever during the two minutes, no interruptions.  
18 You can express yourself after the person has finished  
19 speaking.

20 MR. COLESTOCK: Okay. "As many of you know,

21 this issue is not new to my office. I've been working  
22 for months on how best to address these unwarranted --  
23 unwarranted closures. I've spoken repeatedly with the  
24 Department of Interior officials to voice my view that  
25 these court mandated closures are nothing but last ditch

16

1 payoff to extreme enviros by the outgoing Clinton  
2 crowd.

3 "Although unfair, we have been dealt  
4 court-mandated hand, and we must work our hardest with  
5 all of our available resources to make sure the best  
6 science is put forward to prove us right.

7 "I commend the American Sand Association for  
8 putting forth the resources and volunteer hours  
9 necessary to fight for this goal. As you may know, the  
10 ASA's efforts discovered more than 70,000 of these so  
11 called endangered species plants thriving in our sand.  
12 Of course, the enviros think, that's great, Mo (sic),  
13 but they -- they are still in need of protection because  
14 they only thrive in this one place.

15 "Their distorted logic aside, I think our  
16 efforts have begun to pay off. What would have been a  
17 completely different result had you not all become  
18 involved has yielded some positive results, not -- not  
19 perfect, of course, but certainly better than would have



20 been expected under the previous administration.

21 "The BLM recently came to my office with a new  
22 drafting that you have all heard about and presented a  
23 preferred alternative that, quite frankly, was better  
24 than I expected, although still considerably short of  
25 our ideal plan.

17

1 "My good friends Roy Denner (phonetic), Jill  
2 McGarvie (phonetic) and David Hubbard (phonetic) were  
3 kind enough to pay me a visit the other day on Capitol  
4 Hill to talk sand issues. They make me aware of your  
5 continued concerns with draft round, and I have agreed  
6 to help, but I can't do it alone.

7 "In the coming days they will be coordinating  
8 your concerns and developing a proposal that I will  
9 fight for on your behalf. I encourage your active  
10 participation in this matter."

11 MR. MICHAELSON: Mr. Colestock, you're over two  
12 minutes. I know you were interrupted a couple of times.  
13 Did you just --

14 MR. COLESTOCK: One -- one last little  
15 paragraph.

16 MR. MICHAELSON: Little paragraph?

17 MR. COLESTOCK: Little paragraph.

18 MR. MICHAELSON: I -- I will extend that  
19 because you're representing Congressman Duncan Hunter.

20                   MR. COLESTOCK: "Friends, we'll gain some  
21 ground here in this battle, but the Clinton war on the  
22 west is far from over. We have attempts everywhere to  
23 make us endangered species, to take away our outdoors,  
24 to remove our families from their wild vacation spots.  
25                   "Any day now Senator Boxer will introduce her

18

1 brand new wilderness bill that will chain off an  
2 unprecedented -- unprecedented portion of our state to  
3 all but the most vigorous hikers. The Desert Protection  
4 Act wasn't enough. They're back for more.

5                   "You'll need to stand firm, remain active and  
6 maintain your commitment to freedom. Always know that  
7 you can count on me for my assistance. We've got a lot  
8 of work to do. Let's get to it."

9                   MR. MICHAELSON: The next speaker is Doc  
10 Morgan.

11                  MR. MORGAN: My name is Doc Morgan. I'd like  
12 to read one brief paragraph from the BLM website.

13                  It states, "The BLM sustains the health,  
14 diversity and productivity of the public lands for the  
15 use and enjoyment of present and future generations."

16                  First let me say that I support none of the  
17 BLM's four alternatives. I think the BLM should go back  
18 to the drawing board to draft a new plan and a new EIS.

19                   And I would also like to remind the BLM that  
20 they are stewards of a public trust and that very  
21 stewardship mandates that they consider the majority of  
22 the public above special interest groups and small  
23 percentage groups.

24                   Public trust further mandates a multiple use  
25 policy for our entrusted public lands. The inherently

19

1 destructive nature of OHV activity precludes any other  
2 public activity from either being compatible with or to  
3 use the same public space.

4                   The BLM therefore would be violating their  
5 sacred stewardship of our public lands by sacrificing  
6 those public lands for exclusive use of a small  
7 percentage group.

8                   MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you.

9                   I forgot to make this one other housekeeping  
10 announcement earlier. If you would please turn off your  
11 cell phones and pagers, I'd appreciate it.

12                   The next speaker is Jarrod Bullard.

13                   MR. BULLARD: My name is Jarrod Bullard. Along  
14 with being a BLM volunteer, I'm a member of the ASA and  
15 San Diego Off Road Coalition.

16                   This is a great idea, as suggested in the draft  
17 round, for people who break the -- break the law to  
18 clean a portion of the dunes as their community service

19 just like you see the people cleaning portions of the  
20 freeways dressed in those bright orange outfits. I also  
21 support the rules and regulations as they stand.

22 If you give the BLM rangers, sheriffs and other  
23 law enforcement officers who brought in on big holiday  
24 weekends a fighting chance to enforce these rules and  
25 regulations, it will, over time, eliminate the people

20

1 who create a mob-like mentality and rave-type parties  
2 that take place during those times. Then they will not  
3 need new rules such as curfews and a ban on alcohol as  
4 stated in the DEIS, Chapter 2, page 6, Table 2-1.

5 The second part of my comment is actually  
6 directed toward the audience. The San Diego Off-Road  
7 Coalition, ASA and Orgor (phonetic) are putting on three  
8 information meetings for San Diego. These meetings will  
9 better inform you on what is going to take place in the  
10 ISDRA. These meetings will also help you in structuring  
11 your comments to the BLM.

12 There are two things that I need from the  
13 audience. One, you need to tell as many off-roaders as  
14 possible about these meetings. Two, please come  
15 prepared to take notes for your comments to the BLM.  
16 The information for these meetings are on the ASA and in  
17 San Diego Off-road Coalition's websites and their

18 newsletters. I will also be handing out fliers as you  
19 leave tonight. Thank you.

20 MR. MICHAELSON: Jim Ricker. And again, if you  
21 would please state your name at the beginning of your  
22 comments.

23 MR. RICKER: Hello. My name is Jim Ricker, San  
24 Diego, California. I'd like to address the issue --  
25 first off, I'd like to address to you the issue -- issue

21

1 of outreach to the BLM. From what I can see from the  
2 DEIS, Spanish-speaking people are almost excluded from  
3 this meeting and -- and all the other meetings.

4 No outreach was done. One ad in a -- in the  
5 Via de Sol does not mean outreach. BLM needs to work  
6 with people of color and poor communities in Imperial  
7 County to assess their needs. That's one.

8 And some interesting things have happened  
9 because the BLM has not considered the interim  
10 management as an alternative. Beyond the ground  
11 monitoring that I've done from the air has showed me  
12 that the interim management scheme works. Compliance  
13 with the help of BASA and Off-road Coalitions have --  
14 has -- has been really good.

15 And I think that this -- I think the interim  
16 closures can work as a permanent thing. I'm also  
17 severely disappointed that undercut closure is not

18 considered. The -- that little space right off the  
19 freeway there is an excellent, excellent educational  
20 tool to show how cooperation and education and off-road  
21 riding can all mix together.

22 And I think that that is a -- is a -- a real  
23 sad, sad thing that -- that Buttercup is basically not  
24 in any of the alternatives, except for the Interior  
25 Management Alternative, which wasn't considered by the

22

1 BLM.

2 Also, the interim management alternative would  
3 provide some real socioeconomic data so that we can get  
4 a handle on what are the economic impacts to Imperial  
5 and the other counties as far as the proposal.

6 Thank you, sir.

7 MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you.

8 As indicated, I'm going to read ahead so that  
9 the next speakers can come take their place up in the  
10 speaker waiting areas. The names are Flo Haynes,  
11 Alex Cook, Philip Roullard, and then three girls, I  
12 don't even have the last names at all, who said that  
13 they needed to go on a little bit earlier so that they  
14 can get home to do homework, Julianne Hattaway,  
15 Charlotte Hattaway and Mandy. And when you come up,  
16 I'll need your last name. Okay?

17 Flo Haynes, please.

18 No. Actually, if you wouldn't mind pushing it  
19 over your way. Yeah. Perfect. Thank you.

20 MS. HAYNES: My name is Flo Haynes, and I'm a  
21 member of the American Sand Association.

22 Chapter 2, page seven. "Alternative 2 would  
23 allow access to the AMA via permit only."

24 My four- and six-year-old grandsons who ride  
25 LT80s can't read at this level, so you're actually

23

1 putting a limit on what age can go into this area.

2 The disabled individuals who leave their  
3 wheelchairs and walkers at camp are unable to get out of  
4 their buggies to go inside the ranger station to take  
5 the test.

6 Chapter 3, page seven, Table 3.1-1. The  
7 visitor capacity by management area and camping area is  
8 inaccurate. The subtotal in the D ramp is 3156. The  
9 subtotal in the DEIS is 3172. These figures should be  
10 the same.

11 Chapter 3, page 68. The Cahuilla ranger  
12 station located on Gecko Road consists of a small  
13 building and fenced equipment vehicle storage yard. It  
14 also -- also on Gecko is the vendor area. The presence  
15 of vendors in this area during the peak use times of the  
16 year reflects a human-made character that strongly

17 contrasts with the natural, undeveloped character of the  
18 desert.

19           So the current ranger station, rest rooms,  
20 buildings and trash -- trash dumpsters and the new  
21 ranger station at Osborne (phonetic) valued at \$2.6  
22 million won't strongly contrast with the natural,  
23 undeveloped character of the dunes?

24           Chapter 2, page six, Table 2-1. The DEIS  
25 proposes the fee policy that would collect fees --

24

1 collect -- collect fees in all areas based on demand and  
2 cost recovery. This would discriminate against  
3 low-income families.

4           If -- it is unfair to base fees on fixed cost  
5 recovery amounts to be determined by the BLM. If user  
6 demand goes down, fees go up resulting in an even lower  
7 use demand. This does not meet the purpose and needs  
8 set forth on page ES-2.

9           Chapter 4, page 29. Trip expenditures are the  
10 same for OHV and non -- non -- non-OHV users. Our Ford  
11 F250 pulling our fully-loaded 30-foot Weekend Warrior  
12 uses a lot more gas than a non-OHV visitor. Thank you.

13           MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you.

14           Alex Cook. Is it C-o-o-k?

15           MR. COOK: Yes.



16 MR. MICHAELSON: Thanks.

17 MR. COOK: My name is Alex Cook. I'm a member  
18 of ASA, CORVA (phonetic) and SDORC. My viewpoint  
19 obviously is recreation. I would like to talk about  
20 three different things that I found in the DEIS, again,  
21 in detailed chapters and so forth. I'll put that in  
22 written comments, but I want to talk about it today,  
23 capacity limits, the vending dates, the times of the  
24 week, Friday through Sunday thing, and curfew --  
25 curfews.

25

1 I have a problem with the capacity limits for a  
2 couple of different reasons. Last Thanksgiving the BLM  
3 estimated 180,000 people at the dunes, I think, is the  
4 number that I heard. And those estimates change when  
5 it hits the newspapers. They tend to come up to 200,000  
6 people pounding the dunes and jumping and destroying  
7 land and plants.

8 From reading, what I can tell, the numbers are  
9 very variable, and they can change by -- depending on  
10 who's counting and so forth, and it's going to be very  
11 difficult to do those capacity limits numbers.

12 Also, how are you going to tell people that are  
13 coming to the desert Friday night that their dunes are  
14 already closed, and they have to go home. You're --  
15 lost half the people coming to the dunes that come on

16 Friday night. And you're going to force many, many  
17 people to show up on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday just so  
18 they can get to the dunes to beat the capacities.

19           Second thing I want to talk about is the  
20 vending dates. Kind of reacts (sic) back to the  
21 capacity limits. The vending dates, you want to start  
22 them from Friday through Sunday -- thing. And, for  
23 example, Sweet Marie's, which is there all season long.  
24 I look forward to that. When I go and take the time  
25 when I'm out there on Tuesday, I love going to Sweet

26

1 Marie's. It's quiet. I like visiting with them and so  
2 forth.

3           If you do that and we go over the capacity  
4 limits, there will be no vending -- vendors around  
5 because you're gonna -- you want us to come on during  
6 the week and come on off the weekends. And there won't  
7 be people there at that time, and that restricts  
8 business.

9           Curfews. I don't believe in them. I think the  
10 laws that you started after the 1st of the year are  
11 taking care of the problems. I was there for Easter. I  
12 actually went into the pit for the first time in five  
13 years after the pinch points. It seemed very mellow.  
14 It seemed controlled and so forth.

15                   And I want to thank you. Keep going with your  
16 continued law enforcement, but I don't think curfews are  
17 the answer. Thank you.

18                   MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you.

19                   Philip Roullard.

20                   MR. ROULLARD: My name is Philip Roullard.

21 I've been a person involved with recreation for a long  
22 time, and I've understood that recreation should be fair  
23 to all parties, that you have to provide areas for  
24 different types of recreation for all types of people.

25                   Purely from a recreation perspective, this plan

27

1 is not fair to people who recreate. Recreation should  
2 provide equal areas and equal opportunities for  
3 everyone.

4                   The current management plan that exists offers  
5 an equal amount of land for nonmotorized use as well as  
6 motorized, an equal opportunity for people who perform  
7 all kinds recreation. Purely I feel this plan is not  
8 fair for those people who recreate out in Imperial Sand  
9 Dunes.

10                   It's not fair and it does not provide enough  
11 opportunity for those people who have a nonmotorized  
12 use or form of recreation compared to those people who  
13 perform a motorized use or form of recreation. Clearly  
14 I think the saying "If it's not broken, don't fix it"

15 applies here.

16 MR. MICHAELSON: Julianne Hattaway.

17 You can do it in any order you want. Just  
18 state your name for the court reporter. Okay?

19 MS. HATTAWAY: Julianne Hattaway. "I think --  
20 I think everyone should be able to go to the desert  
21 because how do we know the plants are extinct or even  
22 die?

23 "I think they should have proof or pictures or  
24 something like that, because in school I did a project,  
25 and in that project I had to travel to a state. When I

28

1 did it, I had to have proof that I went to that place.  
2 Like, for instance, I had to print the things off the  
3 computer so I had proof I went and saw the things.

4 "I also want to know what kind of plant was it.  
5 How do we know it was extinct or dead, and why do you  
6 want to close down the only places I have to go have fun  
7 on my quad? Hope you'll save my desert. Thank you a  
8 lot, Julie."

9 MS. HATTAWAY: Hi. My name is Charlotte. "I  
10 think we should not close the desert down. I think we  
11 shouldn't because a lot of people don't live there and  
12 they don't take care of the desert. For example, we do,  
13 and I don't think we should stop going there just

14 because people do things like litter.

15 "People also don't want us to go there because  
16 there is some kind of endangered plant, but I disagree  
17 with what they think. I do because they don't give any  
18 facts. All they do is say oh, there's an endangered  
19 plant and they don't allow us -- that's because of you  
20 guys' three and four wheelers.

21 "But do they have any proof that we are? And  
22 if they do have proof that we are, because I think that  
23 they are just making up the thing. And then it isn't  
24 even our fault that it is endangered, because there  
25 account be a million different reasons why there are

29

1 none of these plants.

2 "Also too, do they even listen to their  
3 teachers when they were younger, because my teacher  
4 always tells me when you write a report or something  
5 similar, you need facts to describe what you're  
6 saying."

7 MS. OLSON: Hi. My name is Mandy Olson.

8 MR. MICHAELSON: Olson? Excuse me. Olson?

9 MS. OLSON: Yeah.

10 MR. MICHAELSON: Thanks.

11 MS. OLSON: "I like the desert because it is a  
12 time that I can spend with my family, my grandparents,  
13 cousins, aunts and uncles and friends. At the same time

14 I like to ride my LTV and have fun. I like the big sand  
15 dunes. My friends, cousins and I always play on the  
16 sand dunes. Please don't take this away from my family,  
17 friends and me. Thank you very much."

18 MR. MICHAELSON: The next speakers up will be  
19 Callie Mack, Greg Moll, Bill Jamison; it looks like  
20 Carl (sic) Murdock, I believe; and Chuck Mobley.

21 Callie Mack?

22 MS. MACK: Hi. My name is Callie Mack, and I  
23 live in San Diego. I believe the BLM is supposed to  
24 provide balanced use for the dunes area, and the interim  
25 management plan with half the dunes closed and half open

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1 for OHV use is balanced and is more than fair to OHV  
2 users.

3 Reopening this closed area will impact both the  
4 desert wildlife and those who prefer quiet, nonmotorized  
5 recreation. Now, surely giving half the dunes over to  
6 OHV users is enough of a compromise. I urge you to  
7 draft a new plan and include the interim management plan  
8 as an alternative.

9 And by the way, I'm one of those enviros. I  
10 can't stand tofu. I'm an American, and I'm proud to be  
11 an environmentalist. Thank you.

12 MR. MICHAELSON: I would really -- I would

13 really appreciate it if we could go by the ground rules  
14 that we were talking about earlier which is that we're  
15 going to show respect for all points of view.

16 I don't mind the clapping and expre- --  
17 positive expressions that you do agree with, but if we  
18 could make sure that we make this a comfortable place  
19 for everyone regardless of their views or express (sic)  
20 themselves, I would appreciate it.

21 The next speaker is Greg Moll.

22 MR. MOLL: I'd like to state that I'm opposed  
23 to any of the four alternatives or the four plans --

24 MR. MICHAELSON: Can you make sure you --

25 MR. MOLL: I'm opposed to any of the four

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1 plans. I'd like to see the plan that's in effect right  
2 now. Two sides of the Algodones coin. Side one,  
3 machinery, money and noise, recreational vehicle or  
4 truck, trailer plus dune buggy, sand rail or other  
5 instrument of destruction.

6 Let's look at the RV. Standard equipment,  
7 propane stove, air conditioning, indoor toilet,  
8 generator. It is outfitted with all of the -- with any  
9 of the following and -- any of the following  
10 accessories: satellite dish with remote control TV, DVD  
11 or video player, home entertainment system, Game Boy,  
12 Play Station, music, noise, fun, noise, cellular

13 phones.

14           They drag everything with them so they can make  
15 the out of doors experience more like a city experience,  
16 you know, drinking, fights, broken bones, drugs, noise,  
17 violence and don't forget fun and good times. Hey,  
18 we're talking about a month -- a bunch of money here at  
19 stake, \$5,000 on the low side, \$50,000 on the high  
20 side.

21           Two sides -- second side of Algodones coin.  
22 Side two, plants, animals, relaxation, a great place.  
23 Now, let's look at the other side of the Algodones Dunes  
24 coin. This side is much simpler. No big fancy noise  
25 making, people machines. On this side of the coin is

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1 the environmentalist, the tree hugger activist and  
2 wacko, many names, same connotation.

3           This person is trying to get away from it all,  
4 you know, the noise, music, machines, the crowds, the  
5 city. We're out here for a little so- -- solitude, a  
6 few hours of relaxation, something besides people and  
7 people machines. Their gear is simple, and it consists  
8 of a small pack, an old-fashioned tent, a Coleman stove,  
9 couple quarts of water, maybe an ice chest, probably a  
10 map and a guide book --

11           MR. MICHAELSON: Mr. Moll, I'm sorry. Your two



12 minutes is up.

13 MR. MOLL: (Inaudible) Hey, we're talking  
14 about this money --

15 MR. MICHAELSON: Mr. Moll?

16 MR. MOLL: -- here --

17 MR. MICHAELSON: Mr. Moll?

18 MR. MOLL: -- the point --

19 MR. MICHAELSON: Mr. Moll, I'm sorry. Your two  
20 minutes is up.

21 MR. MOLL: All right. I'm sorry I'm not Duncan  
22 Hunter's representative.

23 MR. MICHAELSON: I just want to remind everyone  
24 that written comments and oral comments receive equal  
25 and same consideration in this process. We recognize

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1 that two minutes is not a terribly long time, and some  
2 of you have more to say than that.

3 So please, if there's anything you don't have  
4 the opportunity to express tonight, or if you're like  
5 the majority of people, uncomfortable with public  
6 speaking, please take advantage of the ample opportunity  
7 that you'll have over the next two months to provide  
8 your comments in writing. They will be given great  
9 consideration.

10 The next speaker is Bill Jamison.

11 MR. JAMISON: Bill Jamison, San Diego. I've

12 read much of the EIS and the RAMP, and I determined that  
13 both of them are fatally flawed. I thought the BLM  
14 would learn some lessons from the failures of the  
15 previous two RAMPs and the fact that many projects were  
16 not completed due to budgetary and resource constraints.

17 And instead, what you've presented here  
18 includes items such as GM No. 9 and 10, the new ranger  
19 station and law enforcement facility for a total cost of  
20 \$3.2 million, which, I imagine, we don't have the money  
21 for.

22 Also putting a new ranger station at Osborne  
23 doesn't seem practical. It's about as far as you can  
24 get from the two camping areas of Gecko and Glamis  
25 Heris\*. So it seems to me it would be a much better

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1 idea to continue to have the Gecko ranger station and  
2 build another ranger station closer to the Glamis Beach  
3 Store, which would provide additional law enforcement  
4 presence in that area.

5 The curfew, AW No. 30, at a cost of \$520,000 a  
6 year to prevent access to six major hills, according to  
7 the BLM's own study, there's only a problem at one hill,  
8 which is Competition. It seems to me \$520,000 could be  
9 put to much better use than preventing access to hills.

10 It also doesn't state how you would patrol

11 those areas. Obviously there's a number of resources,  
12 law enforcement personnel resources, that would be  
13 required to enforce those curfews, which would leave the  
14 rest of the areas, including all of the major camping  
15 areas, unprotected and a lack of law enforcement in  
16 those areas.

17 According to the BLM -- BLM's own press  
18 release, the current law enforcement increase during  
19 2002 has been sufficient to curb much of the lawlessness  
20 at the ISDRA. I can support a continued cooperative  
21 effort on that. The last item, AM, the adaptive  
22 management area. I don't see any purpose in this.  
23 It's, according to the BLM's own study, a low to  
24 moderate impact today, such a -- based on fuel and other  
25 things. There's no need to --

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1 MR. MICHAELSON: Mr. Jamison, your two minutes  
2 are up.

3 MR. JAMISON: -- permit -- to use permits as  
4 a --

5 MR. MICHAELSON: I'm sorry, sir. Your two  
6 minutes is up.

7 MR. JAMISON: I just want to finish the  
8 sentence.

9 MR. MICHAELSON: Well, finish the sentence.

10 MR. JAMISON: Thank you. There is no reason to

11 establish a permit in monitoring the process. It costs  
12 \$80,000 a year. Thank you.

13 MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you.

14 Carl (sic) Murdock. Please spell your last  
15 name for us.

16 MS. MURDOCK: It's M-u-r-d-o-c-k, Carol  
17 Murdock.

18 Each of us experiences the desert in their own  
19 way. I like four-wheel driving, hiking and  
20 photography. Rare plants such as Peirson's Milk Vetch  
21 and Algodones Dune Sunflower help hold the sand in place  
22 and are found in the Algodones Dunes area.

23 At present half of the 150,000 acres of dunes  
24 are now open to OHV use. From the air there is a  
25 distinct difference in the color of the sand in the open

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1 areas versus the closed sections.

2 A few weeks ago I drove from El Centro to  
3 Ocotillo through a sand storm. Denuded areas had so  
4 much sand flowing on the freeway, it was difficult to  
5 see while driving. Those areas that had vegetation only  
6 had a small amount of sand crossing them which  
7 graphically demonstrated how important the sparse desert  
8 vegetation is.

9 OHV activity destroys these delicate plants

10 which may never recover and will be lost for future  
11 generations. Sand toys may be expensive and fun, but  
12 rare and endangered plant and animal species are  
13 priceless.

14 For the protection of the remaining open  
15 desert, please keep the present system and acreage  
16 between OHV activities and closed areas. And yes,  
17 backpackers and hikers have a permit system and we live  
18 within it, and I'm sure you sand people will learn to  
19 live with it too.

20 MR. MICHAELSON: Chuck Mobley.

21 MR. MOBLEY: My name is Chuck Mobley. The last  
22 guy pretty much made my point. There is a -- there's  
23 32,000 acres for quiet. But one thing I have to tell  
24 everyone here that's gone to the sand dunes and knows,  
25 there's a lot of times I'm out there on the north side

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1 of the dunes and the south side of the dunes, and it's  
2 quiet, and you can't hear anything, so it's not just on  
3 the north side either.

4 One of the areas that -- I mean I've talked  
5 about everything in the last three times I've been here,  
6 so one of the areas I still can't get over is how the  
7 BLM has done their accounting of the people camping  
8 there.

9 It's -- I've read through the EIS many times,

10 and I've asked questions and I've never gotten an  
11 answer. And somewhere before you make your decision,  
12 you need to tell the public how you accurately count  
13 bodies, because if you're telling me that you're going  
14 by six vehicles per half acre, three and a half people  
15 in a camper, that's not accurate.

16 Even the census -- when they did the census  
17 they were thinking about doing something like that, but  
18 they knew that that wasn't the way to do it. They  
19 individually body counted. If you're going to do an  
20 accurate of visits at the dunes, you need to do  
21 individual counts especially as important of an issue as  
22 this is. We can't take estimates.

23 I still want to thank the BLM rangers and Bob  
24 for the great job you guys have done, and I still think  
25 you can continue to do that without the new rules. I'm

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1 going to change my tune on this. If you want alcohol  
2 bans and curfews, that's fine. Make it on an emergency  
3 basis only.

4 MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you, Mr. Mobley.

5 MR. MOBLEY: And go Duncan Hunter.

6 MR. MICHAELSON: The next speakers I have --  
7 and again, if I cannot read or pronounce these names  
8 correctly, I apologize -- are Ingrid Vigeant, Susan

9 Meyer, Pat Flanagan, Cindy Burrascano and Terry Weiner.  
10 Ingrid, please use the microphone to make sure  
11 that the court reporter can hear you and can record what  
12 you have to say and that if you wouldn't mind spelling  
13 your last name for us when you give it to us.  
14 MS. VIGEANT: It's Ingrid Vigeant,  
15 V-i-g-e-a-n-t.  
16 MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you.  
17 MS. VIGEANT: I'd just like to say that we're  
18 all equal here, rich, poor, young or old in the sense  
19 that we're all temporary gifts here. As far as we know,  
20 nobody gets out of here alive. And we all live on the  
21 same beautiful home. We're all responsible for sharing  
22 in the duties of keeping it in as good a condition as  
23 possible.  
24 How would you feel, how would any of you feel,  
25 if a guest in your home trashed your place in the name

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1 of fun and then left it for you to clean up? Rights and  
2 privileges go hand in hand with responsibility or at  
3 least they should.  
4 We all need to be taking very seriously our  
5 duties to take care of -- very good care of our  
6 beautiful home here. I would prefer that no new lands  
7 be opened up to off-road vehicles. I think they're very  
8 destructive, and I think the noise is really an issue

9     and some people's behavior.

10             In my opinion we need to be protecting more of

11     our planet and destroying less. Thank you.

12             MR. MICHAELSON: Susan Meyer.

13             MS. MEYER: Hi. I'm Susan Meyer, and I was

14     fortunate to hike over the Algodones Dunes. The first

15     thing I noticed at 5:30 in the morning was the stillness

16     and then the single distinct fragrance gathered by the

17     many different plants.

18             At this hour I stood before the pink and orange

19     streaks across the sky and rising sun in the distance

20     beyond the gentle giant slopes. We began our hike, and

21     although I was there to monitor rare plants, I soon

22     realized that the plants weren't the only lives limited

23     in number but that the dunes themselves in all its

24     hidden treasures above and beneath its surface were rare

25     gifts.

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1             Hundreds of sand foo (phonetic) were living

2     below and breaking through a strip of crusted soil. And

3     albino cricket was removing sand to make a tiny hole, a

4     shelter from the sun. Below a patch of sand lived a

5     scorpion with extraordinary fluorescent colors. And

6     matching the tone of earth, I saw a young, little, flat

7     tailed horned lizard.



8                   Wind blew sand over the higher dunes and  
9   without warning it made its way to the dip where we were  
10   counting plants. But we continued walking against the  
11   depressure (sic) and found ourselves on the top of the  
12   wall in the midst of a sandstorm.

13                  I will not forget the Algodones Dunes. Whether  
14   it was an animal or plant, sand, wind, or heat, this  
15   sensitive world is filled with joy and drama and the  
16   delicacy of life. And I support all of your efforts to  
17   preserve it through the current management alternative  
18   not listed in the proposed plan. Thank you.

19                  MR. MICHAELSON: I'm really concerned that  
20   we're not going by the ground rules. This is a very  
21   difficult -- I don't care what you have to say tonight.  
22   I don't have an opinion on this matter.

23                  You can say anything you want, but what we did  
24   agree to was -- this is a very difficult thing for  
25   individuals to do, to get up in front of a crowd this

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1   size and express themselves.

2                  I would appreciate it if you would be as quiet  
3   and respectful to anyone who gets up to speak as you  
4   were for those three young girls recognizing how  
5   difficult it was for them as well.

6                  The next speaker is Pat Flanagan.

7                  MS. FLANAGAN: Thank you for the -- thank you

8 for the -- my name is Pat Flanagan, and thank you for  
9 the opportunity to come and speak before this group.

10 I would like just to speak to the point of the  
11 footprint that recreational activities of any kind leave  
12 on the dunes and those which are atop four large wheels  
13 or fewer have a very large footprint in the area of  
14 noise, in the area of exhaust fumes that they have on  
15 the sand formation, on the hydrology, the cultural  
16 resources and the plants and animals that live there,  
17 and that we take into consideration, which is done under  
18 the current plan, that as large as that footprint is, we  
19 need to mitigate for that in even the slightly larger  
20 area to absorb it.

21 When you think of the fact that there are  
22 organisms out such as the kangaroo rat that have evolved  
23 over millions of years so that they have huge auditory  
24 chambers that allow them to hear low frequency sounds to  
25 avoid predators such as sidewinders and the owls that

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1 hunt at night.

2 In areas that I have checked out the pellets of  
3 owls I found a great number of those large auditory  
4 chambers when it's near highways. So the sound out  
5 there has an effect on animals that is not apparent to  
6 us, and we need to understand that, and we need to

7 buffer for that. Thank you.

8 MR. MICHAELSON: Cindy Burrascano. Can you  
9 spell your last name? I just want to make sure I've got  
10 it right.

11 MS. BURRASCANO: B-u-r-r-a-s-c-a-n-o. Hi. My  
12 name is Cindy Burrascano, and I ask you to consider the  
13 current management alternative with the feasible  
14 preferred alternative. While the adapted management  
15 area in Alternative 2 attempts to address the biological  
16 needs of species, I don't believe BLM can adequately  
17 control use in the area as proposed.

18 You currently can't control illegal activities  
19 at the dunes, and if the area isn't really having as  
20 much use as people have suggested tonight, then there's  
21 no problem with closing it and leaving it closed.

22 I was pleased to see AB Custer (phonetic) buses  
23 off Highway 8 but was disappointed that only shaker ties  
24 were proposed. I had hoped that a boardwalk into the  
25 dunes would be provided that would permit people easy

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1 access to see different species.

2 I generally stop south of Highway 8 to see  
3 stanzas (phonetic) and the last time I was in the area  
4 where I reliably see those plants, the span to them was  
5 smashed and the estratalas (phonetic) knocked off of the  
6 base.

7                   This area would make an excellent area to get  
8 people into the dunes to see those dunes species that  
9 most people don't get to see, and a boardwalk would meet  
10 88 requirements for access it's important for the BLM to  
11 provide. Thank you.

12                   MR. MICHAELSON: Next speaker up is  
13 Terry Weiner. I want to read ahead again, so that those  
14 of you who are up next can kind of find your ways to the  
15 speaker waiting area in front of me. After Terry will  
16 be Bryan Henry, Bert McIntosh, John -- I think it's  
17 Ellis and Larry Pennington.

18                   MS. WEINER: Hi. My name is Terry Weiner. I'm  
19 here tonight representing the Delta Protective Council,  
20 a conservation coordinator. Thank you for listening and  
21 hearing us all out tonight, and we also like to retain  
22 the privilege of submitting written comments before June  
23 28th.

24                   Our comments tonight on Draft EIS is something  
25 that the BLM considered and hastily rejected, the

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1 alternative to keep present interim management in place  
2 whereby nearly half the dunes are opened or the activity  
3 on the other half are open to everything but vehicle  
4 use.

5                   This -- this is working. People are still able

6 to go out and enjoy the dunes. I -- I've noticed myself  
7 Thanksgiving south of Glamis, where a large number of  
8 people go, before you get to the closure boundary of the  
9 large closure, there were miles, literally miles of  
10 areas that no off-roaders or anybody else was using.

11 There's still plenty of space out there, and I  
12 really beg you not to close -- not to open the Buttercup  
13 area to use again. That area in just one year and five  
14 months has -- at least a dozen plants have come back --  
15 totally come back to life, and it would be a shame to  
16 just open it up and kill them all again.

17 Besides, that's a very good opportunity for  
18 people to take a walk out in the dunes and see plants  
19 like the Peirson's Milk Vetch. We really want to say  
20 positive things, but the preferred alternative  
21 unfortunately doesn't meet your goal of having a  
22 satisfying opportunity for all types of recreation.  
23 Thank you.

24 MR. MICHAELSON: Bryan Henry.

25 MR. HENRY: Good evening. My name is

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1 Bryan Henry. I'm a member of the American Sand  
2 Association. First of all, thank you for not  
3 considering interim closures a part of the Environmental  
4 Impact Statement. Specifically directed to Ms. Mack's  
5 comments earlier tonight, she noted that there's a 50/50

6 percent split; however, that 50/50 split does not  
7 include the curve nor Algodones, the wilderness area,  
8 which comprises 20 percent of the total area at ISDRA.

9           Given BLM's numbers, which, again, I will  
10 proceed to study closely, there are 10 percent non-OHV  
11 visitors at the ISDRA, and over 20 percent of the area  
12 is closed as represented by the (inaudible) in this  
13 area.

14           Also in terms of hikers, I've been going to the  
15 dunes for 27 years. I've seen hikers twice, when I was  
16 one of them, when I broke my bone after the AT tour this  
17 past December. It was completely my fault and my  
18 mistake, and I take that as an accepted risk of my  
19 activity.

20           However, simply because somebody does not go  
21 out and use an area is no good reason to close it. From  
22 the (inaudible) Associate study, they found that  
23 geopathology and climate has the most impact on  
24 Peirson's Milk Vetch.

25           West Tech study has concluded back in 1977 that

1 there were healthy reproduction populations of all the  
2 species covered. Vietta's (phonetic) study conducted in  
3 1990 concluded that the climate probably had the most  
4 impact because it was a severe drought year. And

5     lastly, one (inaudible) found that there was more  
6     Peirson's Milk Vetch in the open areas than in the  
7     closed areas.

8             Given the scientific data along with the  
9     historical use patterns of the Imperial Sand Dunes  
10    Recreation Area, the most logical conclusion is to  
11    continue with the 1987 (inaudible), Alternative 1, and  
12    continue with the increased law enforcement efforts to  
13    take care of the lawlessness that has increased due to  
14    spring break mentality because of the surrounding --  
15    growth of surrou- -- surrounding communities. Thank  
16    you.

17            MR. MICHAELSON: Bert McIntosh.

18            MR. MCINTOSH: Bert McIntosh. I live in  
19    Poway, and two weeks ago I was afraid of being at a  
20    meeting like this; however, I had an opportunity to  
21    spend five days in Yuma, and while there I took two  
22    field trips out to the Dunes, and I became a believer in  
23    closing as much of the Dunes as we possibly can.

24            One of field trips was in a closed area that  
25    had been closed for years. The diversity was

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1     fantastic, not like a tropical rain forest certainly,  
2     but many reptiles, many species, many plants, a  
3     beautiful area.

4            And, you know, all these years I've looked at

5 those sand dunes, and I thought a lot of sand and a few  
6 creosote bushes. But I learned there's a whole --  
7 there's a whole diversity out there of biological  
8 spectrum.

9 In the other area, however, the ones that are  
10 open -- that have been open for years -- I'm back to a  
11 lot of sand and hardly any creosote bushes, in fact,  
12 hardly anything. The -- the -- the diversity is -- is  
13 this. So I say let's protect what we can, certainly not  
14 make it even more available for destruction. Thank you.

15 MR. MICHAELSON: John Ellis.

16 MR. ELLIS: Good evening. My name is John  
17 Ellis. I live here in the San Diego area, and I am a  
18 member of the San Diego Off-Road Coalition. I'm here  
19 primarily representing myself, my family and hopefully  
20 my grandkids one of these days, although not too soon.

21 The address -- the problem I would like to  
22 address is -- the issue I had is with the law  
23 enforcement that has been in the Dunes. For several  
24 years the BLM has been noticeably lacking in providing  
25 reasonable enforcement that's necessary, many times even

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1 falling below 50 percent of their own allotted figures  
2 for a particular weekend.

3 When they have had sufficient enforcement, the



4 problems have not existed and part of the current  
5 solution that is in the process right now is improved  
6 and suggested by the off-road community itself. Sheriff  
7 Carter of Imperial County came to the off highway  
8 vehicle commission in the state and asked for grant  
9 money for increased enforcement out there. He asked for  
10 \$240,000, and Uma Garden (phonetic) with the Off-Road  
11 Coalition suggested \$500,000 and that grant was  
12 approved. We now have reasonable enforcement to take  
13 care of the problems in the Dunes areas.

14           The problems we have had out there with rave  
15 parties does not condemn it to simply the Imperial Sand  
16 Dunes area or the deserts in general in California. The  
17 problems are being caused by promoters in big cities  
18 putting on rave parties in any remote area that they can  
19 get to without that -- worrying about any enforcement  
20 problems from the law.

21           And this is going on in our national forests,  
22 remote campgrounds. It's all over San Bernardino and  
23 Riverside Counties. And I think you're making good  
24 process -- progress in that right now.

25           To the gentleman earlier that thought we should

1 have 50/50 split, I agree. Let's open the 4 million  
2 acres back up that they closed for environmental  
3 reasons. If you don't have enough land right now, when

4 are you ever going to be happy to take your nature  
5 walks?

6 MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you. I'm going to read  
7 ahead again to the next speakers. After Larry  
8 Pennington, who is next, will be Jonathon Snapp-Cook,  
9 Kurt Schermerhorn, Larry Hogue, Julie Allen and Renee  
10 Owens.

11 Mr. Pennington.

12 MR. PENNINGTON: Larry Pennington. The DEIS is  
13 -- is complicated, to say the least. I've read it once,  
14 scanned it a second time, and I want to read it again  
15 for the third time.

16 As two minutes are not enough, I will be  
17 submitting my specific recommendations with reference to  
18 page numbers, maps, tables before the deadline. That  
19 being said, adapted management areas, visitor supply,  
20 buffer zones, fee areas, reservations, (inaudible), all  
21 sound like more ways to restrict access and costly to  
22 maintain and enforce. We don't need them.

23 If the current rules and laws are enforced, the  
24 Dunes will be better for all. I think the recent  
25 increases in law enforcement has proven that already.

50

1 Let's face it. A lot of the current state of affairs  
2 revolve around 21 days and six major holiday weekends

3 per year.

4 Environment. The majority of off-roaders are  
5 environmentally aware. I do not know of anyone who  
6 intentionally decides to run over a plant or bush just  
7 to get their jollies. And yet, I'm yet to see anyone or  
8 any creatures, for that matter, lying in the sand  
9 helpless and dying. I have never seen it.

10 Economic impact. Local areas were included,  
11 although think they weren't far-reaching enough.  
12 San Diego, Riverside and Orange County, Los Angeles all  
13 have businesses that -- that benefit from recreation  
14 activity. But you forget about the individual user.  
15 Continued closures and restrictions will make my  
16 investments and my desired form of recreation  
17 worthless.

18 I also enjoy hiking; however, I have a hard  
19 time imagining the hikers put tens of thousands of  
20 dollars into the local economy to hike a trail, all ten  
21 percent of them. As for hiking, that is what the north  
22 Algodones Dune is set aside for.

23 I like to reference this to education,  
24 outreach, more law enforcement and some improvements,  
25 but the alternatives and the current draft are

1 unacceptable and sound too costly to implement at a time  
2 when you have difficulty getting the proper funding for

3 additional law enforcement. If funding can be found and  
4 enforce existing rules of law, you probably wouldn't be  
5 having the issues we're having today.

6 With exception to the mentioned increase in law  
7 enforcement, education and outreach and enforcement of  
8 existing rules, I recommend a no latched (phonetic)  
9 alternative. Thank you.

10 MR. MICHAELSON: Jonathon Snapp-Cook, please.  
11 I read the name Jonathon. It looks like Snapp-Cook. Is  
12 he no longer here? I'll call it a little bit later on  
13 in case he is temporarily out of the room.

14 Kurt Schermerhorn. Would you spell that for  
15 me, please.

16 MR. SCHERMERHORN: S-c-h-e-r-m-e-r-h-o-r-n.

17 MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you. Go ahead.

18 MR. SCHERMERHORN: I am Kurt Schermerhorn. I  
19 represent my family, member of ASA; SDURC, Incorporated.

20 I've been going to the desert for almost 40  
21 years, and I hate to see what's happening with the BLM  
22 management. Specifically I'd like to address Chapter 4,  
23 of the DEIS about socioeconomics.

24 You state on page 29 on your assessments and  
25 assumptions -- assumption guidelines that no adverse

1 "Socioeconomic impacts are expected as a result of

2 implementing any of the alternatives."

3 That's not true.

4 On footnote -- you have Footnote No. 2 on the  
5 same page. It says, "Expenditures on capital goods not  
6 included because, one, these goods are most likely  
7 purchased in the visitors' home county and state."

8 True. They're not there in the ISDRA. In which  
9 case none of that money finds its way into the local  
10 economy -- the recreational area.

11 "Two. There is no easy way of splitting the  
12 cost among the various recreation trip destinations."

13 We're talking about ISDRA. We're not talking  
14 about the (inaudible) Sand Dunes, the Sahara Dunes and  
15 El Cajon. We're talking about aggregate costs that we  
16 spend going to the ISDRA.

17 I've looked at your tables and looked at your  
18 estimate numbers, and my apologies to Orvin Modenner  
19 (phonetic), the businesses' representative, if my  
20 numbers fall short of what we spend. Based on the fact  
21 that D RAMP on page 12 you do specify that we come from  
22 Riverside, San Bernardino, Los Angeles, Orange, San  
23 Diego Yuma, Pima, Maricopa Counties.

24 I estimate that the average family probably  
25 spends about \$40,000 on our OHVs, the hauler, their

1 trailer and various goods that they need. The total

2 figure that we probably spend that you didn't count is a  
3 130 million per year. If you run the numbers and you  
4 run the businesses -- I'll be done right here -- the OHV  
5 figure spent per year is roughly \$2.7 billion.

6 MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you, Mr. Schermerhorn.

7 MR. SCHERMERHORN: You need to figure that.

8 MR. MICHAELSON: Larry Hogue.

9 MR. HOGUE: My name is Larry Hogue. I'm  
10 representing the San Diego/Imperial County Chapter of  
11 the Sierra Club. I'm also representing my family, my  
12 two sons who enjoy hiking in the dunes, sliding down  
13 them, searching for lizards.

14 I'm here again talking about equal access for  
15 all, which I don't think the EIS successfully considers.  
16 I would like to make two points about nonmotorized  
17 recreation. First, the north Algodones wilderness does  
18 not meet the needs of wilderness enthusiasts who want to  
19 gain a sense of adventure and discovery in exploring the  
20 dunes.

21 Since our last meeting, I've had the chance to  
22 walk across many parts of the wilderness. The dunes  
23 here are quite narrow making it a nice day hike but not  
24 a wilderness experience. Where the wilderness dunes  
25 become wider, near Highway 78, vehicle noise degrades

1 the experience.

2           The central portion of the dunes are both  
3 higher and wider than those in the wilderness. You walk  
4 for hours surrounded by nothing but dunes. This is the  
5 only spot in the dunes where you truly can pursue  
6 recreation of a primitive and unconfined nature.

7           These may sound like unimportant concerns to  
8 some, but a good comparison would be limiting dune  
9 buggies to just 20-foot dunes rather than 200-foot  
10 walls.

11           Second, why are there so few hikers in the  
12 dunes? The answer is that hiking in the dunes is the  
13 best kept secret in the desert. The public perception  
14 that is that the dunes are OHV only. The BLM has done  
15 nothing to dispel this perception refusing to advertise  
16 beyond the Imperial Valley when promoting hikes and  
17 other activities.

18           I do appreciate the attempt at leading some  
19 hikes, but much more could be done to reach out to  
20 hikers in the rest of the state, if not across the  
21 country.

22           All of this leads to the conclusion that the  
23 dunes have been managed for the single use of OHV  
24 recreation. The result has been a loss not only of  
25 recreational opportunities for the wider public but of

1 economic opportunities for Imperial and Yuma Counties  
2 which would benefit from diversified administration.

3 MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you. We need to -- I've  
4 been informed by the court reporter that she needs a  
5 brief break. We are going to take a five-minute  
6 recess. Please don't go far so we can start right up  
7 again. Thank you very much.

8 (Brief recess.)

9 MR. MICHAELSON: We have used the two-minute  
10 time limit at all of the previous hearings, and we hope  
11 to be able to use it again here. We had a contingency  
12 if we had a much larger number of speakers for actually  
13 reducing that time to even less, to either a minute or  
14 90 seconds.

15 Realizing how difficult that is to get your  
16 comments into -- based upon the number of cards I had at  
17 the beginning of the meeting, we went with the two  
18 minutes. Since then we've had a significant number of  
19 more cards turned in, and at the rate we're going, we  
20 would be here well past 10:00.

21 I have somebody on the staff checking right now  
22 to see if this room is available to us with the hotel  
23 staff. Assuming that it is, we will try and stay as  
24 long as it takes in order to hear from everyone who's  
25 turned in a speaker card and who would like to speak,



1 but I thought it only fair to warn you towards the end,  
2 that will probably be past 10:00.

3 And then finally, this is strictly optional on  
4 your part, but as Lynette Elser said earlier, this is  
5 not a popularity contest. And so the number of times  
6 you say something is not nearly as important as the  
7 number of different types of comments, the breadth of  
8 comments and the detail of comments.

9 So if something has been said a number of times  
10 before, you might look to other things that you can  
11 cover or other details that you can provide in order to  
12 broaden the amount of information the BLM has to base  
13 things on.

14 With that in mind, the next speakers be going  
15 to be Julie Allen, Renee Owens and Carrie Schneider,  
16 Larry Baker, Philip Pryde and Harriet Allen.

17 MS. ALLEN: My name is Julie Allen. I'm the  
18 vice chair of the San Diego Off-Road Coalition.

19 First I'd like to say I appreciate your hard  
20 work, the man hours, the effort that went into this  
21 monstrous project. I really believe that you did really  
22 try to make a good, mental plan. I am sorry to report I  
23 think it falls fairly short of what we off-roaders  
24 expect for -- expect a management plan to be for our  
25 recreation areas.

1           I'd like to address the buffer zone, Figure  
2 1-2, Chapter 2-5, paragraph 2.1.2.1. Nothing -- there  
3 is nothing in the draft EIS to substantiate a need for a  
4 buffer zone. For that matter, there's nothing in the  
5 EIS that defines why the different management areas were  
6 designated as they were.

7           It appears that someone just randomly drew  
8 lines on the map and gave them names that are  
9 historically accepted and then applied ROS designations  
10 just as randomly. No explanation or substantiation is  
11 contained in the EIS as to why any of the nine  
12 management areas were designated. There is no evidence  
13 presented that it was tied to the use patterns,  
14 environmental concerns or any other considerations.  
15 None were given.

16           The buffer zone is wholly unnecessary. I don't  
17 understand what it's designed to protect. See Figure  
18 3.5-1, and the whole management area is already bordered  
19 by management -- excuse me -- BLM land, so I don't see  
20 the purpose for it. Also the buffer zone is presently  
21 designated outside the designated management area. I  
22 don't understand how you can include land off the  
23 management area in the management plan.

24           My major concern is -- is that this unnecessary  
25 and unwarranted buffer zone will be instituted and then

1 two years from now, there's an -- agencies and other  
2 factions may point to it as a successful buffer zone  
3 nevertheless unneeded and unnecessary and will lead to  
4 establish buffer zones in other user areas where it may  
5 or may not but probably will encroach within our  
6 existing riding areas.

7 MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you, Ms. Allen. Your  
8 two minutes are up. Thank you very much.

9 MS. ALLEN: Thank you.

10 MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you.

11 Renee Owens.

12 MS. OWENS: Hi. Thanks. My name is  
13 Renee Owens. I'm a wildlife biologist from Jamul. I'm  
14 here representing the wildlife committee, the Sierra  
15 Club and volunteer for the Center for Biological  
16 Diversity.

17 As an environmental consultant I have problems  
18 with validity of the science discussed in DEIS or in  
19 some cases not discussed. The BLM can't adequately  
20 address the impacts to the dunes habitats without  
21 sufficient surveys of the existing sensitive species.  
22 And the few that are in existence, the surveys, are  
23 incomplete and thus insufficient, poor assessment of  
24 impacts.

25 Statements that OHVs will not have a

1 significant negative impact on habitats are not  
2 supported and are invalid not to mention biologically  
3 irresponsible. And please make a correction. 525  
4 vehicles a day in the adaptive management area is a  
5 significant impact.

6 I think the issue is summed up best by the  
7 conversation I had with a good friend of mine who's  
8 been a dirt biker since he was a kid. He was remarking  
9 about his experience riding in the south dunes south of  
10 the highway. He said all I ever remember is seeing  
11 sand. I never saw a single living thing, not one, not a  
12 tortoise, not even a weed, nothing. And I thought  
13 exactly.

14 A simple comparison between the habitats north  
15 and south of the highway is the best current evidence we  
16 have of how incredibly destructive OHV recreation is to  
17 the sensitive dune habitats. It's not really rocket  
18 science.

19 As an avid mountain biker, I'm someone who  
20 enjoys outdoor recreation. It's fun and an important  
21 part of my life; however, I also know full well that a  
22 minority of hobbyists do not have an in -- inalienable  
23 right to take an entire eco system to destroy as their  
24 playground.

25 Right now the management of the dunes is

1 balanced. Half devoted for OHV use. Half is closed.  
2 It's a working compromise, and I think it should stay  
3 that way.

4 MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you.

5 Carrie Schneider.

6 MS. SCHNEIDER: Good evening. My name is  
7 Carrie Schneider. I live in San Diego. I'm also a  
8 part-time off-road camper, just for the record. I would  
9 like to urge you to include the interim management plan  
10 in the EIR.

11 I've noticed from tonight, comments from the  
12 audience tonight and in other areas, that it's become  
13 popular to disparage wildlife, protection of wildlife,  
14 and to teach our children to disparage protection of  
15 wildlife and plants.

16 I would like to speak up for the plants and say  
17 that it's not simply a weed. It's not simply something  
18 that's in the way of recreation. They are natural life  
19 that has evolved over millions of years, and to think  
20 that we disparage plant life is ridiculous considering  
21 that we live on plant life. We build our homes with  
22 plant life. We use plant life to protect ourselves from  
23 diseases. Twenty-five percent of your medicines these  
24 days are from our plants.

25 I'm a member of the biotech industry. We use

1 natural diversity and current modern products. If we  
2 destroy habitats in the dunes, we have no idea really at  
3 this time what we're destroying that took literally  
4 millions of years to evolve.

5 The eminent biologist Ian Wilson (phonetic) was  
6 in town a couple weeks ago speaking for bio diversity,  
7 and he has tallied up the amount of impact that humans  
8 have had on the world, and it's 35 percent increasing --  
9 of all natural life has been taken by humans. He  
10 suggests that a compromise is 50 percent. One ironic  
11 thing that the 50 percent is what we have now in the  
12 dunes. So I would urge you to consider that. Thank  
13 you.

14 MR. MICHAELSON: Larry Baker.

15 MR. BAKER: Hi. My name's Larry Baker. I'm  
16 from Riverside and I'm a volunteer for the American Sand  
17 Association. I'd like to thank you are for not  
18 considering the interim temporary closure of land.

19 I'd like to start by saying in '96 I was  
20 injured from a work-related injury, and I suffered  
21 permanent disabilities. I had to give up some of my  
22 favorite hobbies which was BMXing, and I used to race  
23 dirt bikes.

24 After a couple of years I was able to get out  
25 of a wheelchair, and I was introduced to sand railing in

1 the Imperial sand dunes. And I'm able to get in my  
2 buggy and go out on the dunes and enjoy all the  
3 excitement that the dunes bring to people that like the  
4 dunes and like the activities like I do. I do  
5 everything a little bit different than most people, but  
6 when I'm in my buggy, you'll never know.

7 And one thing I wanted to say is in Chapter 3,  
8 page five of the DEIS it states that the south Algodones  
9 Dunes, formerly WSA 362, has been removed for  
10 consideration, and is now designated a Class L, limited  
11 use open area. I ask you please remove that from Table  
12 3.5-1 and from the RAMP plan and Appendix 2.

13 From everything I read from all the reports in  
14 the DEIS, it states that the plants are doing fine.  
15 They just need water. Thank you.

16 MR. MICHAELSON: Philip Pryde.

17 MR. PRYDE: My name is Philip Pryde. I'm  
18 speaking this evening as a representative of the San  
19 Diego Audubon Society, whose purpose is to support the  
20 protection of America's natural heritage.

21 We encourage a continuation of the interim  
22 management plans. The proposed adaptive management plan  
23 appears to be an attempt to please everyone, but we  
24 suspect that in reality it will probably please almost  
25 no one as many speakers tonight have already indicated,

1 and we really wonder if BLM is going to be able to  
2 enforce all of the provisions that it proposes.

3 If the adaptive management plan area contains  
4 sensitive species, as apparently it does in reflection  
5 of the limitations that have been proposed, that  
6 motorized vehicles are probably not going to be  
7 compatible, and the area should be designated as  
8 accessible to the public by foot only.

9 To us, none of the four alternatives seems  
10 optimal. We support including the continuance of the  
11 interim plan as a study alternative, and we would hope  
12 that the BLM find and select it as the preferred  
13 alternative. We will later submit written comments.  
14 Thank you.

15 MR. MICHAELSON: Next speaker is Harriet Allen.  
16 I want to read ahead several names, however. Betsy  
17 Brack, Martha Coffman, Janette McGarvie, Jim McGarvie,  
18 and I believe it's Grant George. And also I read this  
19 name earlier and they weren't in the room. I said I  
20 would read it one more time. If Jonathon Snapp-Cook is  
21 here -- maybe it's Shapp-Cook -- if you come forward,  
22 I'll call you in this group of individuals as well.

23 Ms. Allen.

24 MS. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Michaelson. I want



25 to express my deep appreciation to the BLM for all it is

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1 doing in putting these documents together. It's no easy  
2 task, I'm sure.

3 I have degrees in both recreation and biology  
4 and I also drive an Explorer, so I understand some of  
5 the dichotomy that I see in the room, but I am very  
6 nervous about it because I think there's too much at  
7 stake.

8 I enjoy the combination of recreation and  
9 biology, and I don't think that one is more important  
10 than the other and I find that living a life of  
11 combination is very, very rich and enjoyable. I  
12 understand the lure of mechanized recreation. I do  
13 think that some of it is not productive, but I have  
14 never been afraid of it.

15 I hold federal aviation licenses as a dual twin  
16 engine pilot, as a commercial pilot, as an instrument  
17 pilot and as an instructor, and I have always enjoyed  
18 mechanical things, so I don't see that there has to be a  
19 dichotomy. It's impossible physically to put all types  
20 of activity on each acre of ground no matter whether  
21 it's in the desert, in the mountains, on the ocean.

22 MR. MICHAELSON: I'm sorry.

23 MS. ALLEN: So I think we need to develop --

24 MR. MICHAELSON: Your two minutes is up. Thank

25     you very much.

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1             Betsy Brack.

2             MS. BRACK: My name is Betsy Brack.

3             MR. MICHAELSON: Make sure to speak in the  
4     microphone.

5             MS. BRACK: I'm a Sierra Club member. Speaking  
6     in the interest of science, let me say both the plan and  
7     the EIS seem to conclude that the ORVs have little  
8     impact on Peirson's Milk Vetch and other plants of the  
9     dunes. This conclusion is based on Williby's (phonetic)  
10    report on the BLM's plant monitoring from 1977 to 2000  
11    and on the Olson (phonetic) report. Neither of these  
12    reports can be relied upon to draw such an extreme  
13    conclusion.

14            The Williby report states explicitly, quote,  
15    "The monitoring reported on here should not be  
16    interpreted to mean that ORV use is somehow good or even  
17    benign for the six species studied," end quote.

18            Yet looking at the management plan and the DEIS  
19    and the biological assessment, it's clear that this is  
20    exactly how this monitoring is being interpreted, and  
21    this is a flaw in the EIS and the biological  
22    assessment.

23            Now, Williby also states on page 28, quote,

24 "It's important to understand that this study was  
25 designed as a monitoring study, not as research to

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1 determine whether ORV use is reducing the numbers of any  
2 of these six target plans," end quote.

3 But the monitoring is being used to draw  
4 conclusions that it can support. This is a flaw in the  
5 plan and the EIS. As for the Olson study, there's not  
6 enough time to enumerate all its flaws, but one of these  
7 is the fact that the wilderness and vehicle closures  
8 were observed from the air. And guess what? No Milk  
9 Vetch were found in these areas. According to the map  
10 presented to the biological assessment, in reality there  
11 are several adult plants in that area.

12 MR. MICHAELSON: Ms. Brack, your two minutes is  
13 up.

14 MS. BRACK: Thank you.

15 MR. MICHAELSON: Martha Coffman.

16 MS. COFFMAN: Hi. My name is Martha Coffman.  
17 Thank you for this opportunity. I am actually going to  
18 be reading from a letter that my brother sent to the  
19 editor of the LA Times.

20 MR. MICHAELSON: The court reporter is having  
21 trouble hearing you. Would you speak a little closer to  
22 the mike.

23 MS. COFFMAN: Okay. I am reading from a letter

24 my brother wrote to the editor of the LA Times that was  
25 published this past Saturday, and it reads, "I am both

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1 an off-roader and environmentalist. I am always amazed  
2 at how shortsighted policies can be that open up areas  
3 loaded with rare, poorly understood -- stood plants and  
4 animals.

5 "Only recently Gila monster venom was found to  
6 contain what may be an antidote to Alzheimer's. Who  
7 would think that wiping out something so rare and ugly  
8 would have an effect on the human race.

9 "Far too little is known about the biology of  
10 the Algodones to allow for the destruction with the wave  
11 of the hand. What a lot of people don't know is that  
12 there are levels of habitat required to sustain many  
13 species in any given area.

14 "Many species court by using noises to shock  
15 their mate. The infiltration of motorized recreational  
16 vehicles has been shown to interrupt or eliminate the  
17 reproductive cycles altogether. That amount increases  
18 exponentially with the decrease in resources such as  
19 those found in dune areas.

20 "So even if you don't directly destroy a plant  
21 or animal species, if you ruin the area near or around,  
22 you may cause the pollinators or foodsources -- and they

23 die out anyway."

24 Please maintain the current management. Thank  
25 you.

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1 MR. MICHAELSON: Janette McGarvie.

2 MS. MCGARVIE: Janette McGarvie, member of San  
3 Diego Off-Road Coalition and former state commissioner  
4 of off-highway vehicle recreation.

5 I'd like to -- in light of the evening hour,  
6 I'll submit my comments in writing, but I would like to  
7 thank the committee for being here this evening and  
8 providing us all the opportunity to speak. Thank you.

9 MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you very much.  
10 Jim McGarvie.

11 MR. MCGARVIE: Good evening. My name's Jim  
12 McGarvie. I'm chairman of the San Diego Off-Road  
13 Coalition. Thank you for the opportunity to speak  
14 tonight. I'll be presenting written documents later.  
15 I'll just make a couple of comments here briefly.

16 First I want to commend the BLM for the work on  
17 the DEIS and the RAMP. I know a lot of work went into  
18 it, and we appreciate the fact that they are obviously  
19 intending to continue to manage the dunes for multi use  
20 recreation.

21 We appreciate in addition that the interim  
22 closures were not considered part of the baseline for

23 the alternative and that there's an obvious commitment  
24 to continue to increase law enforcement.

25 I'll make one comment tonight regarding one

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1 portion of the DEIS that has me a little concerned, and  
2 that is the possibility of carrying capacity  
3 limitations. I think we need to question the reasoning  
4 behind the 55,000 visitor figure and also the 15 and 20  
5 percent triggers.

6 I think my biggest problem with this area is  
7 the problem I had with many areas in the DEIS, and  
8 that's an apparent lack of good, sound scientific data  
9 to support some of the recommendations. In fact, I  
10 think -- I think that's something that maybe the  
11 environmental community and the off-road community seem  
12 to share.

13 I notice a common trend throughout this  
14 evening's comments of concern and the lack of scientific  
15 data. Their concern is a little bit different from  
16 ours, but I think you would satisfy one or both groups  
17 more if you could back up some of these proposals with  
18 sound science. Thank you.

19 MR. MICHAELSON: I want to read ahead again for  
20 the next speakers that will be coming up so that you can  
21 come up to the speaker waiting area. After Grant George

22 and Jonathon Snapp-Cook, if he is here, will be  
23 Dwayne Williams, Sherman Schneller, Mark Harms,  
24 Melinda Scharf and Glenn Scharf.  
25 Grant George.

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1 MR. GEORGE: Hi. My name is Grant George. I  
2 along with my family own Funco (phonetic) Motor Sports.  
3 I'm also here as a member -- as a board member of the  
4 American Sand Association representing approximately  
5 20,000 members. I also want to thank the BLM for not  
6 using the interim closures as a baseline.  
7 Tonight I want to comment on the DEIS -- DEIS  
8 and the serious concerns I have with it. I would like  
9 to state -- say up front that if I produced a product  
10 like this, the DEIS, for the kind of money the BLM  
11 spent, I don't think I'd have a business today. My  
12 business, my future, my livelihood and that of my family  
13 as well as many of those in this room clearly was not  
14 considered when this document was.  
15 On page 4-29 in the DEIS you refer to  
16 socioeconomics. You also make reference to assumptions.  
17 I'm here to tell you that your assumptions are wrong.  
18 No adverse socio -- and I quote.  
19 "No adverse socioeconomic impacts are expected  
20 to occur as a result of implementing any of the  
21 alternatives."

22           This quote is absolutely false. This EE -- EIS  
23 draft has me listed as a reference. Fatuma Yusoff  
24 (phonetic) from CH2M Hill, contacted me last November,  
25 and during our conversation I indicated to Mrs. Yusoff

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1 how critical these dunes remaining open were to my  
2 business, how capacity limits of any kind -- excuse  
3 me -- would adversely impact my company and hundreds  
4 just like mine.

5           Based on what I read, it appears Mrs. Yusoff  
6 didn't get the message. Can anyone endorsing this  
7 document really believe there would be no adverse  
8 socioeconomic impacts that are expected? I want to make  
9 it very clear tonight if you impose any capacity limits,  
10 there will be disastrous adverse socionomic --  
11 socioeconomic impacts throughout California and Arizona,  
12 not just in Yuma and Imperial Counties.

13           Also I'd like to add about the 50 percent us,  
14 50 percent them deal, we get back 50 percent of Eureka  
15 and \*Kelsoe (phonetic), we'll talk.

16           MR. MICHAELSON: Is Jonathon Snapp-Cook here?

17           All right. We'll assume he's not here.

18           Dwayne Williams is our next speaker.

19           MR. WILLIAMS: Hi. My name is Dwayne Williams.

20 I'm an ASA volunteer, and there's been a lot said, what



21 I was going to say already, but I'd like to thank the  
22 BLM for not including the current closures in the RAMP,  
23 and that's really about it. Everything else has been  
24 said, and I'll send in my brief comments too. Thank  
25 you.

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1 MR. MICHAELSON: Sherman Schneller.

2 Okay. Next one. Mark Harms.

3 MR. HARMS: Hello. My name is Mark Harms. I  
4 own and operate Sand Tires Unlimited located in  
5 Riverside County. I also sit on the American Sand  
6 Association board of directors. As well I currently  
7 hold the position of honorary board member for the  
8 Off-Road Business Association, ORBA.

9 I would like to take this opportunity to extend  
10 my opinions and concerns that I have with this document  
11 in general and with the socioeconomics more  
12 specifically. (Inaudible) Expressly recognize that the  
13 CDCA contains recreational resources that are uniquely  
14 located adjacent to a large population, and there's a  
15 code and section for that.

16 With this in mind, it should be noted that  
17 almost every OHV recreational opportunity on federal  
18 land is adjacent to a large population. There typically  
19 isn't a large population inside counties that provide  
20 dune recreational opportunities. To produce a document

21 like this one that doesn't address these populations is  
22 globally shortsighted and very challengeable.

23           Expecting the DEIS in its current form would be  
24 analogous to building a jetliner under -- and under  
25 design and critical structure components and using

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1 defective parts. The end result would be catastrophic  
2 and disastrous.

3           We the duners and the business class are the  
4 passengers of this destructive plan, and I would suggest  
5 that we will feel a pain if the inspectors in this room  
6 and outside this room fail to repair those defects.

7           In the short time I have, let me address some  
8 of the defects that I believe just touch the surface  
9 here. The -- with respect to what Neil presented a  
10 little earlier, the supply of recreational opportunities  
11 at the ISDRA exceeds the demand during 89 percent of the  
12 time. That means that 89 percent of the time the demand  
13 is -- is met. That means that 11 percent of the time we  
14 exceed the opportunity. This also means that we are  
15 only four percentage points from your first trigger.

16           MR. MICHAELSON: I'm sorry, Mr. Harms. Your  
17 time is up. Thank you very much.

18           And just a reminder, any additional comments  
19 that anyone wants to make can be submitted in writing,

20 and they will be given the same weight and consideration  
21 as oral comments offered here tonight.

22 The next speakers I want to call ahead to be  
23 aware of who you are are Melinda Scharf -- Melinda  
24 Scharf, Victor Flake, Mary Placa, Bill Buchanan and  
25 Les Dearing.

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1 Melinda Scharf.

2 MS. SCHARF: My name is Melinda Scharf. I use  
3 the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area for off-highway  
4 vehicle recreation. I have been visiting the ISDRA for  
5 ten years. My comment regards the adaptive management  
6 plan under Alternative 2.

7 As stated in chapter and page 2-7 in the DEIS,  
8 "Access will be allowed to this area via permit only,  
9 limited to 75 OH seekers (sic) defined as up to seven  
10 vehicles equaling 525 vehicles per day for the first  
11 year."

12 The estimated first year's cost of implementing  
13 this program are \$98,800 as set forth in Table 4-6 of  
14 the draft RAMP. I disagree with this action. The  
15 following are my reasons: OHV enthusiasts also know  
16 this proposed adaptive area as the deep dunes. It is  
17 many, many miles from frequented camp sites and not a  
18 popular destination for OHV enthusiasts. Therefore this  
19 area has historically experienced a low level of OHV

20 activity.

21           There is no evidence that OHV use will reach or  
22 even exceed the 525 vehicle limit per day throughout the  
23 season. \$100,000 is an extremely large amount of money  
24 to spend towards a program with no justification. It  
25 will be a waste of money and time resources to implement

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1 this program.

2           I would like to propose an alternative for  
3 consideration. In putting -- with opening the entire  
4 area up to all OHV use during the first year in  
5 conjunction with the proposed implementation of the  
6 monitoring program set forth in Alternative 2, as  
7 described in chapter and page 2-7 in the DEIS.

8           In addition I would like to see a study  
9 performed within the adaptive management area to  
10 determine the exact amount of OHV use per day throughout  
11 the season. Not until then can an accurate program  
12 structure concerning these lands -- thank you.

13           MR. MICHAELSON: Glenn Scharf.

14           MR. SCHARF: My name is Glenn Scharf. I'm  
15 commenting on the draft EIS. In Appendix C of the draft  
16 EIS air quality data is based on the U.S. EPA's 1991  
17 data for nonroad engine and vehicle emission studies.  
18 The study was written with all -- when all-terrain

19 vehicles and motorcycles had been all two-stroke, oil  
20 burning engines.

21           Since the mid 1990s, manufacturers have made  
22 high performance, low emission four-stroke vehicles.  
23 This has not been taken into account in the draft EIS  
24 emission numbers. There is a limited riding season for  
25 non-green sticker, two-stroke vehicles currently in

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1 place.

2           All these vehicles are -- as these vehicles are  
3 phased out, the pollution numbers will decrease. I want  
4 to see the OHV emission numbers revised and based -- and  
5 based on current data.

6           In Appendix C of the draft EIS, commission  
7 factors are based on a six-hour riding period per day,  
8 per vehicle. These numbers are grossly overstated.  
9 Based on our group's riding habits, we would ride  
10 approximately an hour and a half, and we do ride them  
11 often.

12           If we rode on the -- the BLM's weekend or their  
13 three-day, two-night -- three-day, two-night basis for  
14 a -- a visit six hours per day, we would not be able  
15 to -- excuse me -- walk at the end of our weekend. It's  
16 very stressful. It's a very physically demanding  
17 sport. Thank you.

18           MR. MICHAELSON: Mr. Flake.

19                   MR. FLAKE: I'm Victor Flake. The act of  
20 riding an ORV is an inherently destructive one.  
21 Although ORV riders may not intend to be so, using an  
22 ORV for its intended purpose scars the desert while  
23 destroying any plants or animals in the way.  
24 Additionally, ORV use ruins the desert experience for  
25 nonmotorized recreation.

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1                   When faced with the fact that 80 animal and 60  
2 plant species live on the Algodones Dunes -- a  
3 reasonable -- a reasonable person would conclude that  
4 plants and wildlife and ORVs cannot safely coexist.  
5 Needless to say, most everyone enjoys having fun.

6                   For those people who choose to do so, ORV  
7 riding is just such a thing. But when someone's fun is  
8 deadly or harmful to the well-being of others, it ceases  
9 to be fun and becomes a serious problem.

10                  ORV riding has become a serious problem to  
11 plants, a problem to the creatures and a problem to  
12 nonmotorized recreationists at Algodones Dunes. To get  
13 to the core of the issue, the majority of ORV riders do  
14 not come to the Dunes to appreciate the many priceless  
15 characteristics of the desert. If they are interested  
16 in the wonderful silence, the plants and amazing  
17 adaptive creatures, they wouldn't bring an ORV.

18                   Unfortunately the riders merely prize the dunes  
19   for their ability to be sped upon, roosted and jumped.  
20   And in the process of speeding, roosting and jumping,  
21   magnificent plants and creatures are destroyed. For all  
22   those visitors not interested in ORV riding or aren't  
23   able to afford one, ORV use precludes their fun.  
24                   The BLM should protect our country's national  
25   heritage while ensuring the responsible use of our

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1   public lands. Any measure to increase the amount of  
2   land ORV use doesn't protect our country and in no means  
3   resembles anything in the way of being responsible.  
4   Thank you.

5                   MR. MICHAELSON: Mary Placa.

6                   MS. PLACA: First of all I'd like to thank  
7   you --

8                   MR. MICHAELSON: Could you please state your  
9   name, please?

10                  MS. PLACA: My name is Mary Placa. I'm a ASA  
11   member, dune enthusiast and the mother of a future dune  
12   enthusiast, and I would like to go ahead and reference  
13   you to Chapter 3, page seven, as the BL- -- quote from  
14   the BLM.

15                  "The BLM has not performed an ROS inventory of  
16   the land within ISDRA, nor has it designated those lands  
17   a relative ROS classification."

18 I'd really like to suggest that they look into  
19 this and do a correct inventory of this. How can you  
20 put this information in here and not do an inventory of  
21 it? It makes no sense. That's what I have to say.  
22 Thank you.

23 MR. MICHAELSON: Bill Buchanan.

24 MR. BUCHANAN: Hi. My name is Bill Buchanan  
25 from Riverside. We've been going out to Glamis for

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1 about 25 years. We used to go out there when you could  
2 go on both sides of the tract, both sides of the  
3 highway. So the side that we ride on now, I haven't  
4 seen a big change in the last 25 years.

5 The other side, they've got that. They keep it  
6 open. They do what they want. You don't see very many  
7 people using it. Talking about a 50/50 use area. The  
8 number of people on the dune side for riding versus the  
9 people on the other side, you don't see a whole lot of  
10 people taking a long two- or three-day hike out there.

11 The problems that they've had with big parties  
12 and stuff like that, the rangers have been doing a super  
13 job. There's zero tolerance. I'm all in favor of that.  
14 The only thing I'd like to see added to that maybe is --  
15 and I have Jeeps that are street legal and we do street  
16 legal stuff -- is to keep street legal vehicles out of



17 there. They don't need to be at Competition Hill, the  
18 trucks and the people bringing in the garbage with their  
19 trucks and everything they want to burn.

20           If we keep that open to green sticker vehicles,  
21 off-road vehicles -- that's what's it's intended for and  
22 that -- and that side of the Dunes gonna change. It's  
23 going to get cleaned up, and I participate in all the  
24 cleanup dates. My kids do. I've got three kids that  
25 have been going out there since they were born.

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1           They -- that's where they'd rather go than  
2 Disney Land. You ask them, that's what they want to  
3 do. It's just -- I understand, you know, you gotta have  
4 some place that's open for the hikers and stuff. That's  
5 fine. That's open over there. Obviously they're using  
6 it once in a while because they say how quiet it is and  
7 they enjoy it. Great. Go enjoy it, but don't interfere  
8 -- don't intrude on what we're doing on our side. If  
9 we're maintaining it and managing it and it's working,  
10 leave it be.

11           If we need to police it a little because of the  
12 people going out there, hey, if costs us a little  
13 more -- we spend money for our permits to camp out  
14 there, for our bikes, for everything else. Do they pay  
15 a permit or anything? Is there any money income for  
16 them to go walk over there? So we supply -- we

17 support --

18 MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you.

19 The next speakers that I have -- if you would  
20 come up to the waiting area up front, are Les Dearing,  
21 John -- looks like John Glascock, Janet Anderson, Roy  
22 Denner, Ray Wright, and Roger Tebo.

23 Les Dearing.

24 I thought I called his name earlier, so maybe  
25 he is not here. Les Dearing? Okay.

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1 John Glascock.

2 MR. GLASCOCK: Hi. My name is John Glascock  
3 from San Diego. I'm speaking as an individual. I have  
4 spent some time flying over the Algodones Dunes and it  
5 has been marked very well. And I've spent some time  
6 hiking around the periphery of some of the closed areas,  
7 and I must say that you can very well tell the  
8 difference between the closed areas and the open areas.

9 And I believe that the present management plan  
10 has been working pretty well out there. It needs some  
11 fine tuning, but most of the things that need fine  
12 tuning have already been identified this evening. And a  
13 lot of them have been implemented. And I believe that  
14 if the BLM does the fine tuning that has been evidenced  
15 and improves the present management plan, that we'll be

16 able to preserve at least half the dune area for  
17 off-road recreation.

18           And I believe that's the challenge for the BLM  
19 is to do that very thing, because otherwise the whole  
20 Algodones Dune area might become a wilderness area and  
21 natural preserve as happened in some other states, and I  
22 think that we should address those issues and fine tune  
23 what we're already doing. Thank you.

24           MR. MICHAELSON: Janet Anderson.

25           MS. ANDERSON: Hi. My name is Janet Anderson.

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1 I want to mention something that somehow has been  
2 neglected all evening, much to my surprise, probably  
3 because it's so obvious. But the Algodones Dunes are a  
4 beautiful, magnificent, wonderful sight to see. I  
5 remember the first time I saw them driving east on  
6 Highway 8, and my mouth fell open and I lost my breath.  
7 It was just so stunning.

8           So you, BLM, you have a wonderful job to manage  
9 those dunes and to manage them as you mentioned to us  
10 with your goals of managing them for all recreational  
11 uses of all citizens and also managing them to protect  
12 the resources that are there.

13           We have heard this evening about a lot of  
14 different biological resources that are there that do  
15 need protection. However, it does seem to me from what

16 I've heard this evening and from the list of  
17 alternatives that are presented, that the emphasis on  
18 the plan is the emphasis on the use of recreational  
19 vehicles, and that's a single type of recreation.

20 And I know that there are a lot of them that  
21 come out there, and there's not a lot of those of us who  
22 are not recreational vehicle users who come out there.  
23 Why is that? I think perhaps there could be more  
24 encouragement of people who are hikers, who are nature  
25 lovers.

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1 And I would like to recommend that you have a  
2 visitor center. There's a beautiful BLM visitor center  
3 up in the Santa Rosa mountains by Palm Desert, something  
4 like that to educate all of us, vehicle users and  
5 walkers, on the beauty of the dunes. And I'd also like  
6 to support Cindy Burrascano's idea about the boardwalk  
7 so we can get into the dunes easily. Thank you.

8 MR. MICHAELSON: Roy Denner.

9 MR. DENNER: My name is Roy Denner, and I'm the  
10 president of the Off-Road Business Association and  
11 member of most of the off-road groups in this room. I  
12 am compelled tonight to speak on behalf of my business  
13 organization on socioeconomic impacts that are described  
14 in Cha -- Section 3.4, and I want to start by reading a

15 couple of sentences from there that I believe were  
16 written by someone who has no idea what the off-road  
17 recreation industry is in California and its  
18 relationship to the Imperial Sand Dunes.

19 Two statements. "For purposes of the  
20 socioeconomic analysis, the study area includes Imperial  
21 County, California and Yuma County, Arizona."

22 Second. "The majority of the socioeconomic  
23 impacts associated with trips to the recreation area  
24 assume staying in Imperial County where the dunes are  
25 located with some spillover occurring in Yuma County,

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1 Arizona."

2 I also want to read two paragraphs out of the  
3 NEPA document, one from section 4ECFR150222. It says,  
4 "Underneath --

5 MR. MICHAELSON: Excuse me. You're pushing the  
6 limits of how fast she can type.

7 MR. DENNER: I only have two minutes.

8 MR. MICHAELSON: I know that.

9 MR. DENNER: Do I get a few seconds added for  
10 the interruption?

11 MR. MICHAELSON: Yes, sir.

12 MR. DENNER: "Underneath the agency must  
13 include all relevant information regarding impacts."

14 It also says that "the NEPA regulations define

15 the (inaudible) effect to include the following:

16 Ecological, esthetic, historic, cultural, economic,  
17 social or health whether for direct or indirect."

18 In 1993 a study was done on what the off-road  
19 recreation industry means to the State of California.  
20 At that time they came up with \$3 billion. Since then  
21 it has increased significantly.

22 I want to enter a document into the records.  
23 It was produced by the State of California Parks and  
24 Recreation Department, full of statistics, not filled  
25 with rhetoric, that shows what the impact on California

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1 is on the off-road recreation industry.

2 And I want to close by saying if the  
3 environmental extremists continue to oppose off-road  
4 recreation and other forms of recreation in the public  
5 lands of California, and they continue to halt  
6 development, pretty soon our economy in California is  
7 going on implode, and we'll all have an exciting hiking  
8 experience walking to work every day.

9 MR. MICHAELSON: Your time is up.

10 Ray Wright.

11 MR. TEBO: Good evening. My name is  
12 Roger Tebo.

13 MR. MICHAELSON: I'm sorry. Is Ray Wright not

14 here? I called Ray's name. Is he not here? I guess  
15 you're ready to go then.

16 MR. TEBO: My name is Roger Tebo, and I'd like  
17 to begin by thanking the members of the panel for giving  
18 me the opportunity to come in here this evening. My  
19 wife, Linda, and I own and operate a small off-road  
20 parts business in Los Angeles county in Whittier,  
21 California, Dune Buggy Enterprises, Incorporated, a  
22 California corporation doing business as Fun Runner.

23 We have been in this business continuously for  
24 34 years, and we were one of the early participants in  
25 the BLM vendor program at the ISDRA. To my knowledge

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1 we, were the only vendor to have sold and paid fees at  
2 all three designated vendor areas.

3 My feeling, strong feeling, that the vendors  
4 should not be limited to the time they are there for all  
5 the hard work they put it. I've had the experience --  
6 it would be totally unfair to those vendors to limit  
7 them from like a Friday through Sunday regulation.

8 I was going to address Section 3.4 that Roy  
9 read, but since he read that already, I would add that  
10 Glamis has been and continues to be the major  
11 contributing influence on the success and continued  
12 viability of our business.

13 The EIS address of economic impact only as it

14 pertains to Imperial and Yuma Counties is ridiculous by  
15 its lack of inclusion of the major other counties in  
16 California. That's our focus -- is like treating only  
17 the big toe in the care of a patient.

18           The capital investment and trips -- trip  
19 expense of our customers alone who visit the ISDRA is  
20 huge, and the spill over to other businesses, many of  
21 those seemingly --

22           MR. MICHAELSON: Mr. Tebo, your two minutes are  
23 up.

24           MR. TEBO: Okay. Thank you very much.

25           MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you very much.

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1           I'll just encourage you particularly if you're  
2 reading your comments to look up occasionally. I know  
3 some people are having a hard time because they never  
4 actually see the yellow sign.

5           The next speakers up are Jeri Ferguson, Tom  
6 Ottenberg, Kay Signorelli, Jim Signorelli, Byron  
7 Anderson and Julia Benedetti.

8           Jeri Ferguson is our next speaker. Just a  
9 minute. I'm assuming everyone was here at the very  
10 beginning, but just in case you were not, as I call your  
11 name, if you'd come forward and sit in the speaker  
12 waiting area. Thank you very much.



13 MS. FERGUSON: Hi. My name's Jeri Ferguson. I  
14 represent the California Association of Four-Wheel Drive  
15 Clubs.

16 One of the things I want to bring up with you  
17 the panel have heard before is the wilderness issue.  
18 Back in 1994 69 wildernesses were designated, and out of  
19 that designation the sand duners lost Kelsoe Dunes,  
20 Eureka Dunes and a couple other dune systems and places  
21 where they used to recreate.

22 This was not considered in the DEIS, so we have  
23 this big piece of pie. We're down to a quarter of the  
24 area of the sand dunes that we can play in now and use  
25 and recreate. And out of that sand dune area, the north

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1 dunes were also closed to protect the plants and species  
2 in the north Algodones Dunes.

3 So what it comes down to now is we have  
4 another -- out of our quarter another chunk is being  
5 asked to be taken away. And one of the things in the  
6 CBD lawsuit was this was a temporary closure to  
7 determine whether or not there was an impact to the  
8 species, and it's been pretty much -- from the way the  
9 draft has been, that there's not an impact.

10 And it's a temporary -- people need to remember  
11 that. It was only temporary. We've lost so many areas  
12 to recreate in, AND we keep getting told you have the

13 Algodones Dunes. You have your open areas. Now there's  
14 a proposal out by the Center for Bio Diversity to make  
15 the open area a limited use area. When is enough going  
16 to be enough? Thank you.

17 MR. MICHAELSON: Tom Ottenberg.

18 MR. OTTENBERG: Hi. I'm Tom Ottenberg. I work  
19 for a company called IMC, an American corporation. We  
20 import parts in from roughly five different countries,  
21 just the off-road industry. We are a \$120 million  
22 company. This is a great impact to us, what happens  
23 with this industry and what the closures might do to  
24 it.

25 I want to let you know that our company has

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1 relatively over 400 employees. We also have other  
2 manufacturers in other countries who depend on the  
3 products being brought over here and then being sold  
4 over this way.

5 And what you do and what you consider greatly  
6 impacts my company and impacts the confidence of other  
7 people in other countries. And please take that into  
8 consideration when you're considering this stuff and, if  
9 anything, open the deserts up more because more people  
10 need to use this. Thank you.

11 MR. MICHAELSON: Kay Signorelli.

12 MS. SIGNORELLI: I want to thank the BLM for  
13 allowing all of us to come in and express what we need  
14 to say.

15 MR. MICHAELSON: Your name?

16 MS. SIGNORELLI: My name is Kay Signorelli. At  
17 this point I don't feel like I can say much more than  
18 what everyone else has already said. After coming to  
19 the meeting in El Centro and then the one here in  
20 San Diego, I really realize that I need some help on how  
21 to word and how to state my feelings to the BLM.

22 I feel that at this point that ASA and some of  
23 the other -- some of my other desert friends might be  
24 able to help me put my thoughts into print better than  
25 what I can say here. So I speak for myself, and I hope

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1 other people that are here will have meetings in their  
2 homes so that we can get together to learn how to voice  
3 our opinions to you in writing. Thank you.

4 MR. MICHAELSON: Jim Signorelli. Actually I  
5 have two different spellings for your names between  
6 these two cards.

7 MR. SIGNORELLI: That's my wife.

8 MR. MICHAELSON: One or two Ls?

9 MR. SIGNORELLI: Two Ls.

10 MR. MICHAELSON: Go ahead.

11 MR. SIGNORELLI: I've been going to the desert

12 for --

13 MR. MICHAELSON: State your name, please.

14 MR. SIGNORELLI: James Signorelli. I've been  
15 going to the desert for 32 years. My children and my  
16 stepchildren have all gone to the desert. They've  
17 enjoyed the desert for years. Now I have grandchildren  
18 that enjoy the desert. The things that we don't like is  
19 obviously the trash that gets out there. The kids out  
20 there, my children and I go out and pick it up. We do  
21 that quite often.

22 My children have learned an awful lot from the  
23 desert. They could never have learned this stuff  
24 without taking an off-road vehicle and traveling across  
25 the dunes and see these animals that people say they see

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1 out there. I can't walk across the dunes. I'm not  
2 capable, not just being old, just, you know, a little  
3 bit crippled here and there.

4 It's nice to be able to go out there and see  
5 the beauty, listen to quietness and stuff, because like  
6 I said, I've been doing it for 32 years. We don't tear  
7 stuff up. None of our friends do, and I have a lot of  
8 friends here tonight. We don't ever tear things up. We  
9 keep it nice.

10 It's a recreation that, you know, we've been

11 doing as a family. You people do have families. I'm  
12 sure you like doing things together. If they took your  
13 family thing away, tennis, golf, whatever you like  
14 doing, and said you can't do this, you can do it very  
15 little, or we're going to cut you off, I'm sure it  
16 wouldn't thrill you to death either.

17 My grandkids sometimes -- they don't live here  
18 in San Diego, and they've got to come from out of town  
19 and say, we can't go to the desert this weekend because  
20 we don't have a permit. That would be horrible. I  
21 don't think they should be allowed to have permits. I  
22 think it should be left open. More open desert, less  
23 accidents. You have more people out in the areas.

24 Take the freeways. Cut down two lanes on each  
25 one on Interstate 5 and see what kind of problems you

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1 have. That's what you're doing to our desert. Please  
2 open it back up for all of us. We sure would appreciate  
3 it. Thank you.

4 MR. MICHAELSON: Byron Anderson.

5 MR. ANDERSON: Hi. My name is Byron Anderson.  
6 I'm here tonight representing myself and my sons and my  
7 daughters. We're all outdoor recreationists.

8 First, I just like to thank you for giving us  
9 this opportunity to talk, and I do want to mention  
10 what's also been mentioned before me, is that how

11 fortunate we are to have such a beautiful Algodones  
12 Dunes in our backyard and the opportunity to go out and  
13 recreate in and also to mention again the awesome  
14 responsibility that the BLM has in monitoring who should  
15 use these resources and attempting to preserve them for  
16 generations yet to come.

17           My own background spans many different areas in  
18 recreational. I'm a hunter. I'm a fisher. I'm an  
19 outdoor RV recreationist. I'm a camper and a hiker,  
20 even a bird watcher. And I can sympathize with both  
21 sides of the equation, the RVers and those that want to  
22 see this area set aside in their natural state.

23           The older I get the more I appreciate the  
24 opportunity for solitude and recreating in an area where  
25 noise is something that you don't experience and where

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1 you can really experience the vastness of the  
2 wilderness. And I think as years go by, this is going  
3 to be more and more important.

4           So in the final analysis we obviously have to  
5 compromise. And I think that the current interim  
6 management program does that by splitting approximately  
7 50/50. And I think that that should be considered and  
8 should be given a lot of weight in the alternatives that  
9 you study.

10                   And regardless of how it turns out, there is  
11 going to be a tremendous responsibility on the BLM and  
12 the ORVers to use these resources in any way. I guess  
13 the final analysis a Teddy Roosevelt type of  
14 conservation. I'd like to see things passed on to the  
15 generations yet to come. Thank you.

16                   MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you.

17                   The next speaker is Julia Benedetti. She will  
18 be followed by Natalie Roselli, Vicki Warren, Bryan  
19 Warren and Michael Benedetti.

20                   MS. BENEDETTI: Thank you for giving me the  
21 opportunity to speak with you tonight. I'm an  
22 environmental biologist. Also I grew up in the desert  
23 near these sand dunes. My family owned a dune buggy.  
24 We never had a problem finding a place to use it.

25                   Secondly, I'm also an American, and I'm really

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1 glad to see all these people out here tonight. This is  
2 our right as Americans to voice our opinions. Our other  
3 right as Americans is to have open wilderness passed on  
4 to our children.

5                   I am very concerned that my children, my future  
6 children, will not have a place to go when they grow up,  
7 and that saddens me a great deal. I guess just what I  
8 want to say is I don't think this should come down to  
9 money. I don't think this should come down to pride or

10 rage or hatred.

11 I think we can find a way to split this land  
12 50/50. I think the current way it's split is the way to  
13 go, and I really hope that everyone can learn to live  
14 together and respect each other, and that's all I have  
15 to say. Thank you.

16 MR. MICHAELSON: Natalie Roselli.

17 MS. ROSELLI: Hi. My name is Natalie Roselli.  
18 I'm a resident of San Diego. I'm opposed to the  
19 preferred alternative plan. In this plan only ten  
20 percent of the land is closed to ORVs, yet this is an  
21 activity which is extremely destructive to animal and  
22 plant species as well as to the eco system as a whole.

23 My forest work in conservation ecology makes me  
24 question whether or not 28,000 acres is enough space for  
25 endangered species to regain their numbers. What's

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1 more, I'm concerned that more species will become  
2 endangered and go extinct if ORVs are not limited more  
3 strictly.

4 The Bureau of Land Management is a nonpartisan  
5 agency. It exists to protect land and by default the  
6 species and egrets that live on that land as well as  
7 recreationists that want to go there.

8 However, I believe very strongly the good,



9     nonpartisan science and ecological study, not temporal  
10    interests of what's fun or what's not fun, be  
11    reconsidered -- be considered in your rethinking of the  
12    preferred alternative plan. That's all I have to say.  
13    Thank you.

14                 MR. MICHAELSON: Vicki Warren.

15                 MS. WARREN: My name is Vicki Warren,  
16    W-a-r-r-e-n. I want to discuss the draft EIS  
17    specifically first and then nonspecifically. Chapter 3,  
18    page 35 regarding the flat tailed, horned lizard. You  
19    discussed that Argentine ants are threatening to -- it  
20    looks like they're marching toward the Algodones Dunes.  
21                 They live on harvester ants. They take over.  
22    What happens then is that flat tailed, horned lizard,  
23    who also lives on harvester ants, starts to die off.  
24    This is going to be a big problem for us. You mentioned  
25    that in your draft EIS, but you don't follow up with any

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1    plan to get rid of the invasive species.

2                 This has to be changed. Please present a plan  
3    for eliminating the invasive species. If you  
4    acknowledge that it's coming, you better come up with  
5    something to fix it.

6                 The draft EIS is terribly flawed. There is a  
7    lot of information in the document that does not match  
8    one page to another, let alone one document to another.

9     So many of the numbers don't match, but yet you're  
10    asking us to form opinions on something that we can't  
11    possibly look at logically.  You're asking us to vote  
12    for a candidate, but you won't tell us who the candidate  
13    is.

14               Your information does not match.  Even if you  
15    take your own numbers -- sorry, Neil -- if you count up  
16    that 55,000, and you go down that column, those numbers  
17    don't add up.  They don't -- they don't just sitting  
18    here, and I did that in my head, on paper and on my  
19    calculator, so it doesn't work out.

20               The last thing I'd like to say to the positive  
21    comment -- I for one, very much appreciate the fact that  
22    you have -- have emphasized recreation in this plan.  I  
23    understand the 50/50 split.  Most people go to Yosemite  
24    because they like the smell of the trees.  They like to  
25    walk the forest.  They like to camp there.  That's the

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1    majority.

2               The majority of the people go to Glamis because  
3    they like to ride there.  They like to recreate there.  
4    The minority wants to walk the dunes.  Take the 32,000  
5    and walk the dunes.  A minority wants to ride in  
6    Yosemite, we won't be allowed to.  This is a fair and  
7    equitable beginning of a plan that needs to be worked

8 on. Thank you.

9 MR. MICHAELSON: Bryan Warren.

10 MR. WARREN: My name is Bryan Warren. I just  
11 have a real quick comment about the EIS and the  
12 mitigation. You have the EIS that -- for up to ten  
13 acres that you close down for any reason. You only give  
14 back a quarter acre on the paths, on Gecko or  
15 Buttercup. This means that if you do start closing down  
16 areas, everybody will be forced to go back to either  
17 Gecko Road or Buttercup, and that's about all I have to  
18 say. Thank you.

19 MR. MICHAELSON: The next speaker will be  
20 Michael Benedetti. He will be followed by Patrick  
21 McConnell, James Justus, Tom Norton and Laura Zahn.

22 MR. BENEDETTI: Hi. My name is Michael  
23 Benedetti, and I've been in research science for about  
24 five years. And I just wanted to touch on the issue of  
25 scientific proof. And everyone is kind of up in arms

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1 that there's not scientific proof that ORVs, et cetera,  
2 cause harm to the environment.

3 Scientific proof is very hard to come by, and I  
4 also don't see much proof on the other hand that wanton  
5 use of the environment and overuse of the environment  
6 doesn't cause harm.

7 I come from a long family of outdoorsmen. We

8 usually spend a week every year, 40 guys in our family,  
9 out in the woods, drinking and partying and having a  
10 good time, and recently we've been banned from our area  
11 we've gone to for the past 50 years in our family. And  
12 it doesn't feel very good to be banned from the place  
13 that you like to go to, so I understand sentiments out  
14 there.

15 And it's a general trend in our world that  
16 there's not enough land for people to go into the  
17 wilderness anymore because there's so many people  
18 there. And it's a problem that the BLM is going to have  
19 to consider as more and more people want to go out to  
20 get away. It's not going to happen anymore.

21 I am in favor of the continuation of the  
22 interim management plan, but if any of preferred plans  
23 are accepted, I'm in favor of restrictions and permits  
24 because the fewer the people that are out there, the  
25 more people who actually get to go out there will be

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1 able to enjoy that area and the wilderness. And I  
2 appreciate you listening to everyone's comments. Thank  
3 you very much.

4 MR. MICHAELSON: Patrick McConnell.

5 MR. MCCONNELL: Good evening. My name is  
6 Patrick McConnell, and I am opposed to reopening the

7 area or the areas. I've been on the Algodones Dunes,  
8 and I've sampled insects on the Algodones Dunes, and I  
9 think there are some fascinating insects out there.

10 Let me just read something really quickly that  
11 a friend sent to me that did some sampling on Algodones  
12 comparing diversity. "This dune complex represents the  
13 most diverse community of dune (inaudible) fauna in the  
14 basement range fauna with one of the higher numbers of  
15 endemic species found on any single dune complex."

16 Now, I do not know what kind of impact  
17 specifically these vehicles have on the species to the  
18 south of the highway, but I do believe it's a very  
19 disrespectful act. And I think people need to learn how  
20 to observe and appreciate nature, and I think that the  
21 real experience is one of observing and appreciating  
22 nature.

23 And it's a more true experience to walk through  
24 nature and feel it and smell it and see it and even  
25 sleep on it. And I plan on walking at least 20 miles on

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1 the Algodones Dunes with a couple gallons on my back.  
2 That's all I have to say. Thank you.

3 MR. MICHAELSON: James Justus.

4 MR. JUSTUS: Good evening. My name's James  
5 Justus. I live in downtown San Diego. Thank you for  
6 giving me the opportunity to speak tonight. Thank you,

7 Mr. Michaelson, for being an impartial facilitator, and  
8 I just have some general comments.

9 Off-roading is my hobby. It kept my family  
10 together during difficult times. I do not play golf,  
11 but I respect others -- people's rights to play the game  
12 of golf. You know there's hundreds and hundreds of golf  
13 courses here in San Diego, but really nowhere to go  
14 off-roading.

15 We just have to rely on the open spaces of the  
16 desert, so I just really want to ask you to respect our  
17 rights to -- you know, to be -- to go off-roading  
18 somewhere. And I'd be opposed to any more acreage  
19 closures, and I'd also be opposed to any curfew at  
20 Competition Hill.

21 However, I would agree to closing certain areas  
22 of the dunes at night due to safety reasons. It's  
23 really dangerous driving out there at night.

24 In closing, I'd just like to say that I respect  
25 the desert and its wildlife, utmost respect, and our

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1 group also leaves the desert in better condition that we  
2 found it. And thank you again, and God bless you.

3 MR. MICHAELSON: The next speakers up will be  
4 Tom Norton, Laura Zahn, Jim -- I'm not sure. It looks  
5 like Rapozo or Rapoza -- and Damron Cecil.

6 Tom Norton.

7 MR. NORTON: Tom Norton. I'm an  
8 environmentalist. I've had my cause hijacked by --  
9 hijacked by extremists. I'm -- I'm the guy that picks up  
10 the trash, turns off the lights, recycles everything. I  
11 even drive a low emission Honda to and from work. These  
12 extremists have hijacked my environmental cause. You  
13 know the crowd. They want their cars, their guns, their  
14 meat --

15 MR. MICHAELSON: Sorry, sir. She's not  
16 getting any of this. Can you slow down?

17 MR. NORTON: These extremists don't really care  
18 about the environment. We're in the nuts and bolts San  
19 Diego County (inaudible) off San Diego's coast in  
20 violation of the Clean Water Act. The administrators  
21 (inaudible) environment as a tool and the Native Species  
22 Act as a weapon. The truth -- the effect on the  
23 environment doesn't really matter to them. The tragic  
24 events of 9-11 have taught us that extremists should be  
25 marched in lines.

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1 The manufacturers and suppliers and enthusiasts  
2 must see this attack on Glamis as an attack on the Twin  
3 Towers. It's time to make a stand and draw a line in  
4 the sand. We must make (inaudible) allow the extremists  
5 to phase out our sport over the next 20 years, or does

6 the sport have value and some is to be allowed to  
7 continue. If we can't (inaudible) the sand, it will  
8 become impossible to defend it anywhere.

9           There is no place on earth where this many  
10 people can off-road on such a small place and a week is  
11 impossible to tell they were there. We must all  
12 remember that the Endangered Species Act is not black  
13 and white science. It is value based, and we must have  
14 our value considered.

15           Extremists should not be allowed to misuse the  
16 Endangered Species Act. They must be forced to prove,  
17 one, a true endangered species exists, the activity in  
18 question is truly detrimental. Detrimental activity is  
19 so bad that it it's outweighed its benefit. And has  
20 enough been done to protect the species. I think it  
21 clearly -- it clearly has with thousands of acres  
22 (inaudible) to its side

23           The four options (inaudible) to get the  
24 off-road community to knowing that the other choices,  
25 quote, "could have been worse," end quote. The only one

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1 that I support that the (inaudible) the entire -- open  
2 forever. Then let's manage this open forever area by  
3 including law enforcement, access roads, camp sites,  
4 sanitation including toilets and dumpsters.



5 MR. MICHAELSON: Laura Zahn.

6 MS. ZAHN: My name's Laura Zahn. It's spelled  
7 Z-a-h-n. I'm working on legislation for a responsible  
8 environmental protection bill. There should be local  
9 representative modification of pending legal action, and  
10 give them time to respond before any legislation is  
11 enacted.

12 There should be a 90-day peer review process  
13 before any legislation is enacted to find out what the  
14 implications are and the practicability of the finances  
15 of legislation that we're forced to adhere to.

16 There should be detailed research on plants and  
17 animals and insects and their needs and requirements  
18 before any land is taken out of circulation. There  
19 needs to be a plan in place, a return to public hands,  
20 prior to removal and closure of public lands.

21 There should be a cap placed on environmental  
22 lawsuit winnings. There should be a time -- a time  
23 count of how many times an organization can choose  
24 limiting to how many times they can sue an  
25 organization.

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1 What is their intent? Are they suing because  
2 they can, or are they suing because they care? There  
3 should be mandatory set aside funds from these lawsuit  
4 winnings to help cities, organizations and agencies come

5     into compliance.

6             And I'll close with two things. Public lands

7     belong in public hands, and God did not give Adam and

8     Eve only 50 percent of the Garden of Eden.

9             MR. MICHAELSON: Last three cards that I have

10    are -- I think I can read this. Jim Rapozo, Damron

11    Cecil and Andy Trikel.

12            Mr. Rapozo, is that right? Please spell your

13    last name for us. I'd appreciate it.

14            MR. RAPOZO: Rapozo, R-a-p-o-z-o. A lot of

15    what I wanted to say has already been said, but I do

16    think that we need to keep the deserts open for

17    everybody that likes to ride. You guys that like to

18    walk, buy a tent. There's plenty of desert out there

19    for you. We don't go on the north side. They're over

20    there.

21            And if we want to spend our money on RVs and

22    satellite dishes and DVD players and everything else,

23    it's our money. We work hard for it. We pay our taxes,

24    and we deserve it.

25            MR. MICHAELSON: Mr. Cecil.

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1            MR. CECIL: Yeah. Well --

2            MR. MICHAELSON: Could you state your name,

3    please?

4           MR. CECIL:  Damron Cecil.  I guess I could say  
5 one of my hobbies.  I'm a wild rivers impact study  
6 coordinator.  I live in Pebble Beach, California.  I  
7 live in Sun Valley, Idaho.  I want to thank the ASA for  
8 everything they've done.  They're right on.  I'm very  
9 disappointed in current temporary closures.  I'm a  
10 freedom of rights supporter.  My attorney's name is  
11 Samuel Sammon (phonetic).  His number's in the phone  
12 book.

13           MR. MICHAELSON:  Andy Trikel.

14           MR. TRIKEL:  Good evening.  My name's  
15 Andy Trikel.  I live here in San Diego right up on the  
16 hill.  I've changed my mind about ten times about what I  
17 was going to talk about sitting out here, now my butt's  
18 asleep and I can't --

19           You know, from an environmental aspect on my  
20 property I've planted about 30 trees.  I like to grow  
21 lilies, especially Canna Lilies from Central America, in  
22 my backyard.  But I also have another hobby.  I like to  
23 go to the desert.  I like to take my dune buggy out to  
24 the dunes, take my kids.

25           I have four kids.  We go running around the

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1 dunes.  I go out there because I care about my kids.  I  
2 don't want them running into light poles or telephone  
3 poles or curbs or rocks or trees.  We go to the dunes

4     because it's a safe place.

5             It's the perfect place to take your family out  
6     and run through the dunes, and the next day you go back  
7     out there, and you can't see any traces of where you've  
8     been. If you go through the high dunes where the wind  
9     blows, there's no track the next day if the wind blows.  
10    It's completely covered up.

11            In fact, sometimes when I'm leading my kids  
12    through the dunes I'll lose them temporarily because  
13    they can't follow me in my track. I'll go around a dune  
14    or hill and I disappear from them because they can't  
15    follow me. That's how invisible we are through the  
16    sand.

17            I've been going out there for 25 years. I've  
18    never seen anybody walking through the dunes that didn't  
19    break down out there. Walking through the dunes. It  
20    doesn't mean my friends from the Sierra Club don't do  
21    that. I'm sure they do somewhere. I've just never seen  
22    it in the Buttercup Sand Dunes. It's really not a  
23    desirable place to walk.

24            The perfect place -- the perfect thing to do --  
25    the perfect thing to do in the dunes is to take some

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1     kind of vehicle and enjoy a ride through there, just  
2     like you go through the Wild Animal Park on the tram, or

3     you go in the zoo and you take the Sky Ferry. You get  
4     in your vehicle, and you go through the dunes and you  
5     enjoy it. It seems like it's a perfect match. We live  
6     in an industrial society, and many of us are blue collar  
7     industrialists, and this is what we do.

8             MR. MICHAELSON: Thank you.

9             MR. TRIKEL: Thank you very much. That  
10     concludes the speaker cards that I have. We have  
11     closing statement from Roxy Trost. And I just want to  
12     remind everyone that written comments can still be  
13     turned in until June 28, and they'll be given the same  
14     weight and consideration as oral comments honored here  
15     tonight.

16            Ms. Trost.

17            MS. TROST: Thank you. Thank you all for your  
18     cooperation tonight. We had a ripple here and there,  
19     but I think overall everyone was very respectful and  
20     that we sincerely thank all of you.

21            We realize that this is a draft document, that  
22     we have a ways to go, and with all of your help -- and  
23     we know we're going to come out better at the end in  
24     preparing the final document.

25            This is our last meeting, and although it

1     wasn't the most highly attended, we certainly had the  
2     most speakers, and we also thank you for that. Also,

3 transcripts of tonight's meeting along with all of our  
4 previous meetings will be available for your review on  
5 the internet in a few weeks. And if you don't have  
6 cable, you'll also be able to view our Power Point  
7 presentations.

8 I also want to remind you that if you chose  
9 that you didn't want to speak tonight or you didn't have  
10 the time to speak, we're still able to accept comments  
11 until June 28 either by regular mail or by e-mail on the  
12 address provided on your comment forms.

13 Thank you and have a safe trip home.

14 MR. MICHAELSON: We are adjourned.

15 (The proceedings concluded at 10:11 p.m.)

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